BRIAN WILSON ★ GRATEFUL DEAD ★ REFUSED

Rolling Stone

Issue 765 August 2015
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PLAYLIST SPECIAL

THE SONGS THAT MADE ME

TAYLOR SWIFT
MARILYN MANSON
ED SHEERAN
MARK RONSON
AND OTHERS

ORANGE IS THE NEW BLACK

Girls Gone Wrong

The Genius Behind

Tame Impala

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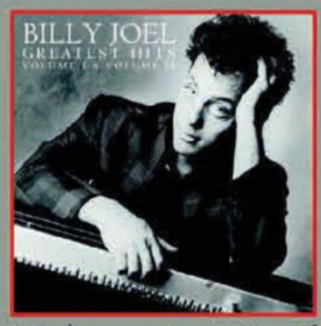
SONY MUSIC

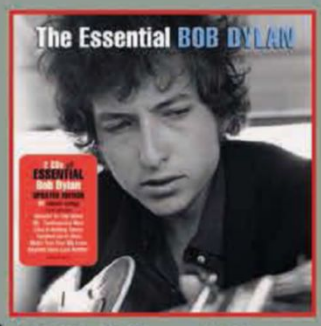
The soundtrack to

BARRY



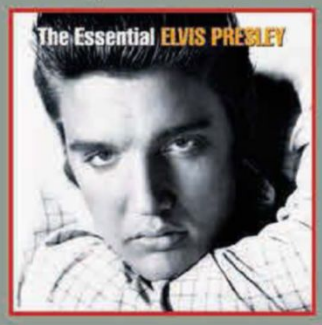


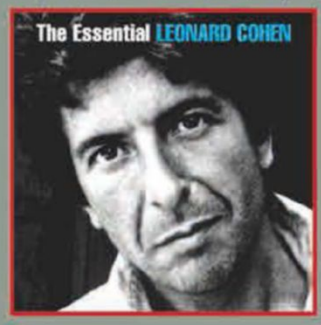




THESE ARE THE SOUNDTRACKS TO BARRYS LIFE



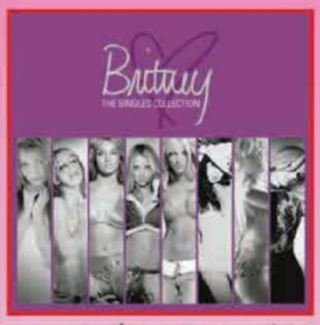






JENNY









THESE ARE THE SOUNDTRACKS TO JENNYS LIFE









your life

MARY



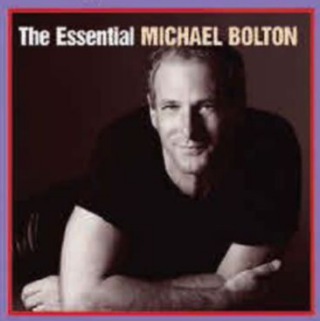


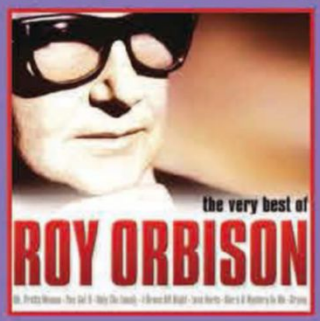




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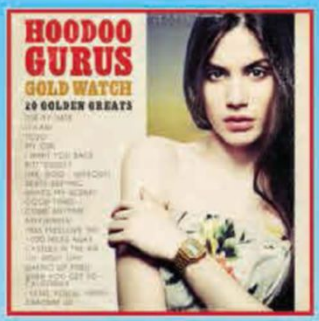


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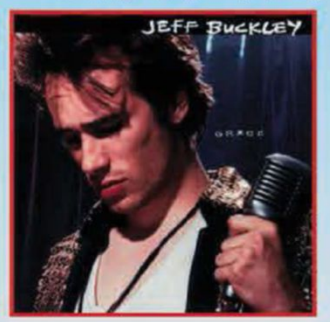


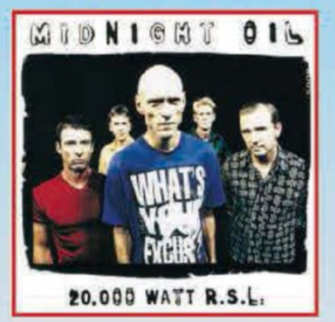






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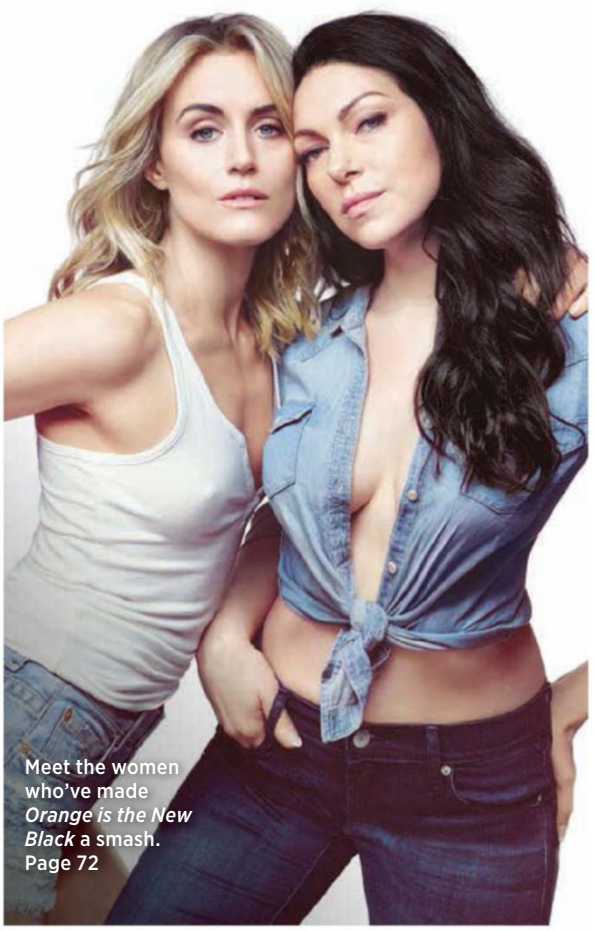




Seth Sentry returns with a new album. Page 29

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"ALL THE NEWS THAT FITS"



Meet the women who've made *Orange is the New Black* a smash. Page 72



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ON THE COVER Kevin Parker photographed by **Neil Krug**

FROM TOP: MICHAEL BUCKNER/GETTY IMAGES FOR SXSW; MARK SELIGER; ROBERT ALTMAN/MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES)



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Album cover shoot for Aladdin Sane, 1973 Photograph by Brian Duffy.
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LOVE LETTERS & ADVICE



Genius Johns

I WAS RIVETED BY YOUR Daniel Johns interview [RS 764]. I savoured the piece like a hot croissant! I have always been drawn to Daniel Johns for his mystique and obvious brilliance in the music world. His taking-life-by-the-balls attitude is just fabulous and it takes a lot of guts and foresight to say it out loud. Passion deserves respect!

Emily Pop,
White Hills, Tas

THREE STARS FOR COVER man-child Daniel Johns' record seems a little churlish, ROLLING STONE. Can we talk? Johns' willingness to stomp off the retro-normative Oz Rock grid is necessarily indulgent and slow-burning but also kinda brave and often thrillingly queer in its reference points as he winks, "Hello sailor" and throws expectations overboard.

David Branigan,
Melbourne, Vic

Credit Due

AUSTRALIAN ARTIST Jarryd James recently caught the attention of Ed Sheeran whilst touring in Australia, in-turn getting a massive nod and shout out from Sheeran with the star naming "Do You Remember" as number 7 in a list of 9 for a playlist "Songs That Made Me" in ROLLING STONE. (The list appears in this issue, but was also published online - Ed.) What an amazing achievement, influencing a modern star, on debut, in these uncertain times! Such a feat should not go unrecognised in the Australian ROLLING STONE.

Austin Dewey,
Tumut, NSW

By Giorgio!

WHO WOULD HAVE thought that the most exciting voice in electronic music would be 75-year-old Giorgio Moroder? His recent work with Daft Punk and Kylie Minogue sent me in the direction of his own album and I haven't looked back. Moroder is making some of the warmest, human-sounding dance music I've heard, and he finally deserves to be recognised as the Godfather of electronic music.

Simon Witby,
Brisbane, QLD

Night, Dave

AFTER READING YOUR piece on David Letterman's last hurrah, I have to say, I really couldn't care less. I never saw the attraction in watching that grumpy old man look disinterested in his guests night after night. Good riddance, Dave!

Crystal Lee,
Fyshwick, ACT

"Giorgio Moroder deserves to be finally recognised as the Godfather of electronic music."

N.W.Eh?

DOES ICE CUBE REALLY think that getting his son to play him in the N.W.A. biopic will make us forget *Are We There Yet?* and *Are We Done Yet?* Come on, man!

Doug Pettit,
Lorne, Vic

WRITE TO US AND WIN



Thanks to Transmission Films, every letter published will win a copy of *Slow West* and *Stranger-land* on DVD (valued at $49.98). Write to us and tell us your thoughts on the magazine or life in general. But keep it brief!

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LISTS

BEST POP CULTURE OF 2015 SO FAR

The midyear reports are in: From Kendrick Lamar and Courtney Barnett to *Game of Thrones* and *Broad City*, here are the top albums, movies and television shows.



HEAR

SPLENDOUR IN THE GRASS KLP PREVIEW MIX

Get ready for the Byron Bay festival with this exclusive playlist from Sydney-based producer KLP.



EXCLUSIVE

INTERVIEW ALEX JAMES, BLUR

The Brit-pop bassist on the band's stripped-back new album *The Magic Whip*, their first Australian tour in 18 years and the art of cheesemaking.



VIDEO

LIVE AT THE RS OFFICE OH MERCY

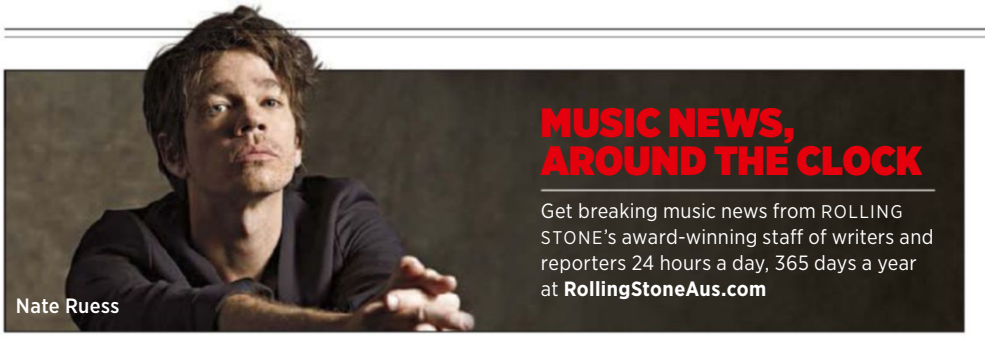
Alexander Gow stops by our office to perform an acoustic rendition of "If You Come Around Tonight", from new LP *When We Talk About Love*.



FLASHBACK

RESIDENT ALIEN BECK

Ahead of his forthcoming new album, we head back to our October 1996 issue for an exclusive feature on where it all began for "Mr. Loser".



Nate Ruess

MUSIC NEWS, AROUND THE CLOCK

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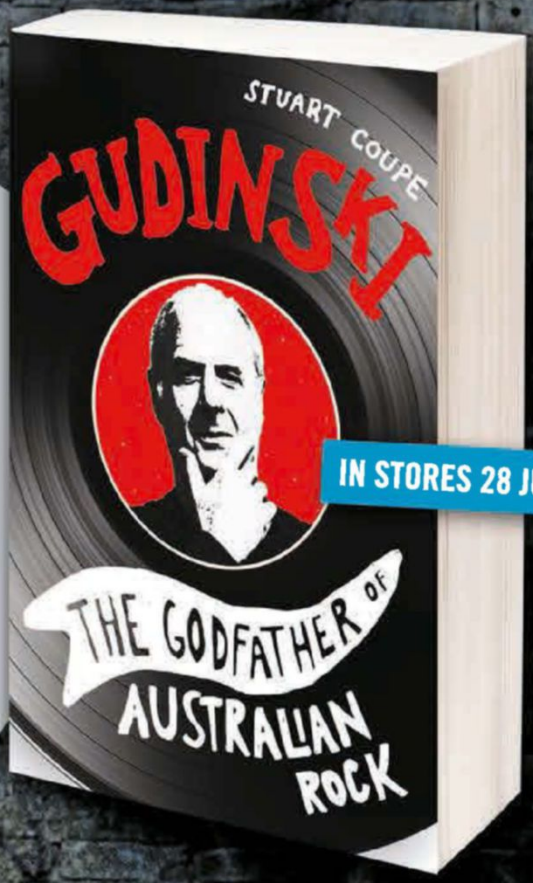


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"It's like we're living in a f--king 'Terminator' nightmare!" —Ryan Adams, on Deadmau5's Governors Ball set

Random Notes



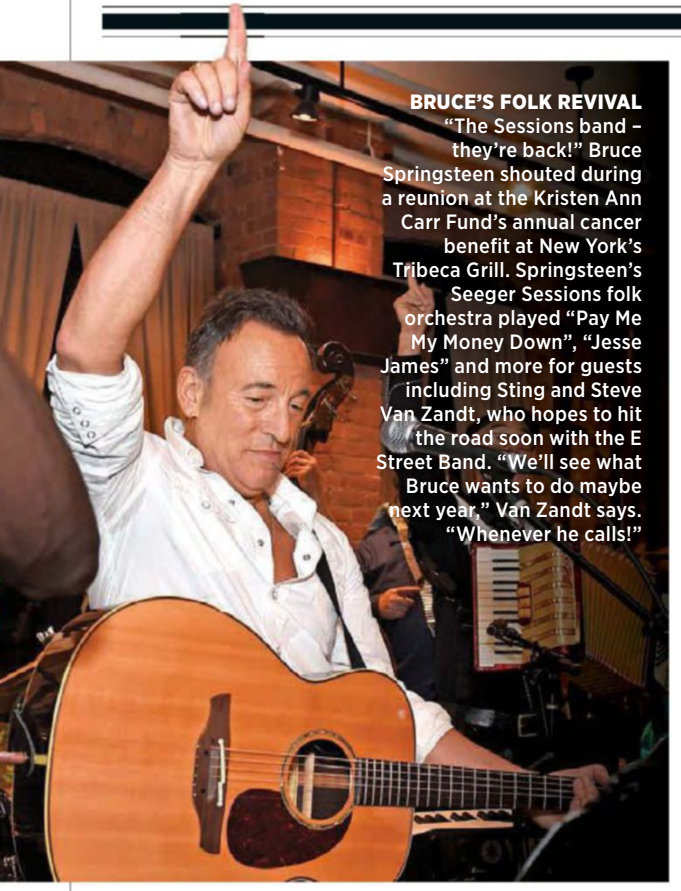
Black Keys drummer Patrick Carney (right) calls Governors Ball "our best show in New York City."

New York's Top Ballers!

New York's Governors Ball once again proved that it's the East Coast's only truly great summer festival, with headline-making sets from the Black Keys, Florence + the Machine, Lana Del Rey, Björk and Drake. One surprise standout: "Weird Al" Yankovic, who busted out classics like "Amish Paradise", "Yoda", "Fat" and his "Blurred Lines" parody, "Word Crimes". "As soon as I walked onstage, the place went insane," says Yankovic. "It kinda blew my mind to hear everybody sing along to songs that were recorded before most of them were born."



SUMMERTIME GLADNESS "It's so amazing to be back," said Lana Del Rey. *Honeymoon,* her follow-up to 2014's *Ultraviolence,* is due this spring.



BRUCE'S FOLK REVIVAL "The Sessions band – they're back!" Bruce Springsteen shouted during a reunion at the Kristen Ann Carr Fund's annual cancer benefit at New York's Tribeca Grill. Springsteen's Seeger Sessions folk orchestra played "Pay Me My Money Down", "Jesse James" and more for guests including Sting and Steve Van Zandt, who hopes to hit the road soon with the E Street Band. "We'll see what Bruce wants to do maybe next year," Van Zandt says. "Whenever he calls!"



FROM FIST CITY TO MUSIC CITY Loretta Lynn and young whippersnapper Jack White were inducted into Nashville's Walk of Fame, joining giants like Hank Williams and Roy Orbison. "Well, I think it's about time!" said Lynn.



LET'S SPEND THIS FLIGHT TOGETHER Mick Jagger jetted from a Minneapolis gig to Dallas on the Stones' very own Boeing 767. They're considering extending the tour. "I'm seeing what the options are!" says Jagger.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: KYLE DEAN REINFORD; GRIFFIN LOTZ; C FLANIGAN/WIREIMAGE; RICK DIAMOND/GETTY IMAGES; MICK JAGGER/TWITTER; MARC LEVINE



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JACKSON FIREBIRD AT THE 2014 ROLLING STONE LIVE LODGE. PHOTO BY BRETT SCHEWITZ

PROFILE HERMITUDE'S SWEET BREAKTHROUGH PG. 18 | **Q&A** STEVEN TYLER PG. 22

Rock ll

The Amy Winehouse We Never Knew

New film digs deep into her life, music and demons

By Andy Greene



FALLEN ANGEL Winehouse in 2007

LEON NEAL/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

About two years ago, documentary filmmaker Asif Kapadia began interviewing Amy Winehouse's friends, collaborators and family members in a darkened studio in London. Winehouse had died less than two years earlier, and emotions were still raw. So Kapadia set his camera aside and used only an audio recorder to make them feel more comfortable. "They were very nervous, and there was a lot of guilt," he says. "It became a bit like therapy. They opened up and talked about things they hadn't really spoken about to anyone before."

Kapadia's film, *Amy* – which premiered at Cannes in May to rave reviews and begins rolling out across Australia on July 2nd – tells the story of the troubled singer in unprecedented depth. Kapadia used unseen archival footage [*Cont. on 14*]

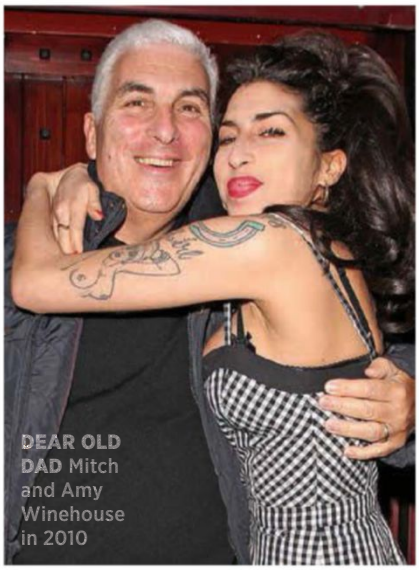
AMY WINEHOUSE

[*Cont. from 13*] and more than 100 newly recorded interviews to document her talent and her painful unravelling, which culminated with her death at age 27 due to alcohol toxicity.

A British filmmaker best known for *Senna*, his 2010 film about a Brazilian racing champion, Kapadia says he knew little about Winehouse when he took on the project. "What I learned was what a creative, intelligent, funny human being she was," he says. "I didn't know any of that. I don't know if anyone did."

As he slowly won the trust of those close to Winehouse – including her best friend, her manager and Blake Fielder-Civil, her ex-husband – they began handing over the rare photos and video clips that make up much of the film. Early scenes, like a teenage Winehouse belting "Happy Birthday" at a friend's 14th birthday party, reveal the singer's natural talent, while the latter half of the film documents her agonising drug problems. Less well-known to the public is her struggle with bulimia, which likely played a significant role in her early death by weakening her heart. "She'd have meetings in restaurants and be eating and eating, but she didn't have anything to her body mass," Kapadia says.

One powerful scene shows Winehouse laying down vocals for "Back to Black" with producer Mark Ronson. "That came to us purely by chance," says Kapadia. "We heard a rumour that someone was filming during the session, and we eventually found it."



DEAR OLD DAD Mitch and Amy Winehouse in 2010

The film repeatedly shows swarms of aggressive paparazzi stalking the frail singer wherever she went, even as she attempted to enter rehab and fix up her life. "It's quite visceral," says Kapadia. "Through the tabloids, her life became a joke, and she was a sensitive soul. She wasn't confident enough to deal with these issues."

Amy's father, Mitch Winehouse, a London cabdriver who began releasing his own music after her career took off, granted Kapadia extensive interviews, and is seen in much of the archival footage – at one point even showing up to visit his daughter on a Caribbean vacation, though she had no idea he'd arrive with a film crew in tow. The overall portrait is of a deeply devoted parent who was also very interested in maximising his child's earning potential, even as her health declined. Mitch was extremely upset with the final cut of the movie. "They are trying to portray me in the worst possible light," he told *The Guardian* in May. (Mitch Winehouse declined to speak with Rolling Stone for this story.)

Winehouse's father has objected to a scene that shows him suggesting his daughter did not need rehab; he said that he meant only that she didn't need rehab in 2005, and that he later supported the idea as her condition worsened. Kapadia stands by his portrayal. "We're telling the story in the present," he says. "At that moment in time, that's what happened."

The final scenes, in which an ailing Winehouse is barely able to sing onstage, can be difficult to watch, as is the moment when authorities emerge from her London apartment with a body bag. "Part of the intention of the ending is to ask, 'How did we let this happen?'" Kapadia says. "How did we let this thing go on, and nobody stepped in and stopped it?"

The Age of the Rock Doc: Four More to See

From a proto-rap poet to a quietly influential hair-metal band, other music films to check out this year

Elliott Smith
Heaven Adores You

What It Is
A deep dive into the singer-songwriter's life, which ended in suicide in 2003.

Why You Should See It
Smith went from playing Portland, Oregon, coffee shops to playing the Oscars; the film explores his unique journey and unearths a trove of unheard songs.

Key Scene
Smith playing "Miss Misery" at the 1998 Academy Awards – a moody folk tune holding Hollywood royalty spellbound.



Gil Scott-Heron
Who Is Gil Scott-Heron?

What It Is
A revealing new look at the influential poet, radical and pathfinding musician.

Why You Should See It
Scott-Heron's words come to life as friends and family – and the artist himself – recite his lyrics.

Key Scene
A label exec reads a tongue-twisting note he got from Scott-Heron. Even when Scott-Heron was discussing business, he was a first-rate poet.



Nina Simone
What Happened, Miss Simone?

What It Is
A look at the volatile life of one of jazz music's defining voices.

Why You Should See It
Director Liz Garbus explores the troubled genius of a singer-pianist who channelled all of her demons into her music. "I have to live with Nina," Simone once said, "and that is so difficult."

Key Scene
Simone's stunning solo piano performance at the 1976 Montreux Jazz Fest.



Quiet Riot
Well Now You're Here, There's No Way Back

What It Is
A reassessment of the "Cum On Feel the Noize" boys, who laid the template for much of the hair metal to follow.

Why You Should See It
It's almost like watching a real-life *Spinal Tap*.

Key Scene
Replacement singer Mark Huff forgets the words to "Cum On Feel the Noize" at a show. Come *on*!

ANNIE LICATA



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: FRED DUVAL/FILMMAGIC; CHRIS WALTER/WIREIMAGE; MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES; MISCHA RICHTER; HEAVEN ADORES YOU

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LOVE AND SEX

Aziz Ansari's Serious Take on Modern Love

Comedian teams up with NYU sociologist for new book on romance in the Internet age

Over the past decade, Aziz Ansari has made the bizarre world of 21st-century dating a centrepiece of his comedy. But when the 32-year-old *Parks and Recreation* alum decided to write a book on the topic, he wanted to do something more serious than his fans might expect. "I didn't want it to be a book of funny essays, 'cause I'd rather just use those ideas for stand-up," he says. Ansari's publisher suggested he co-author the book with Eric Klinenberg, a sociologist at NYU who wrote *Going Solo*, a study of the global rise of single-person households that also touches on the way technology has transformed relationships – a favourite theme of Ansari's. "Once I decided I wanted the book to have this vibe, I needed someone to help me do it properly," he says. "Eric seemed to really get it."

The result, *Modern Romance*, is a hilarious, often unsettling account of what young singles go through as they search for love in the digital age. It shows how the simplest minutiae – How long should you wait to respond to a text? What's the best angle for your Tinder picture? – can become the stuff of existential dread.



Ansari and Klinenberg travelled the globe convening focus groups to quiz young people about their dating lives. In Japan, where taking your own picture is considered tacky, they found that people were using photos of their cats or rice cookers for their online profiles. In Buenos Aires, they encountered singles who arranged late-night meet-ups at *telos*, hourly hotels that seem to carry little stigma. "People were sharing their phones with us," Klinenberg says. "We had access to something no one other than the NSA has access to."

Watching people navigate infinite dating options made Ansari, who has a girlfriend, feel justified to have changed his own strategy not long ago. "I would go on so many first dates and get frustrated when that spark wasn't there," he says. "So I tried to spend more time with people and go on more fourth and fifth dates and really get to know someone."

ELISABETH GARBER-PAUL



A scene from *The Tribe*

HOT FILM

A WHOLE NEW KIND OF SILENT FILM

Set at a school for the deaf, 'The Tribe' takes off from an extraordinary concept

The Tribe is one of the most powerful movies in recent years – and one of the strangest. Set at a school for the deaf, it's told entirely through sign language, with no subtitles or voice-overs. The movie, which won the Critics' Week grand prize at Cannes last year and is awaiting an Australian release date, focuses on the school's teenage gang members who commit crimes under the tutelage of a corrupt wood-shop teacher. Director Myroslav Slaboshpytskiy used only deaf amateurs, whom he cast through Ukrainian, Russian and Belarusian social media. While he doesn't understand sign language, Slaboshpytskiy culled from his experience as a crime reporter in the Nineties, covering the Ukraine's "deaf mafia", a small group that controlled decisions among the deaf community. "This way of communication looks like a miracle," he says.

JASON NEWMAN

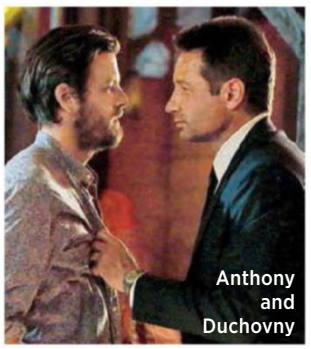
TELEVISION

The Sixties Through the Eyes of a Square

David Duchovny is a cop navigating psychedelic 1967 on 'Aquarius'

'Aquarius" has all the hallmarks of a show set amid the Sixties counterculture: free love, long hair, plentiful weed, Jefferson Airplane on the soundtrack. But at the centre of the series [now screening on Presto] is a character who wouldn't be caught dead wearing patchouli: flattopped L.A. detective Sam Hodiak, played by David Duchovny. "I hadn't really seen the Sixties portrayed through the point of view of a middle-aged law-enforcement officer – certainly not recently," says creator John McNamara. A work of historical fiction, *Aquarius* focuses on Hodiak's search for a missing girl taken in by wanna-be rock star Charles Manson (*Game of Thrones*' Gethin Anthony). To ensure fidelity to the times, McNamara and his team looked to old *Life* magazines and films like the 1967 fringe-scene documentary *Mondo Hollywood*. "You want to say it's from a different time," says Duchovny, discussing Hodiak's penchant for cracking skulls, "but it turns out to be more timely than we thought."

MARK YARM



Anthony and Duchovny

FROM TOP: DRAFTHOUSE FILMS; JOE SCARNICI/GETTY IMAGES; VIVIAN ZINK/NBC

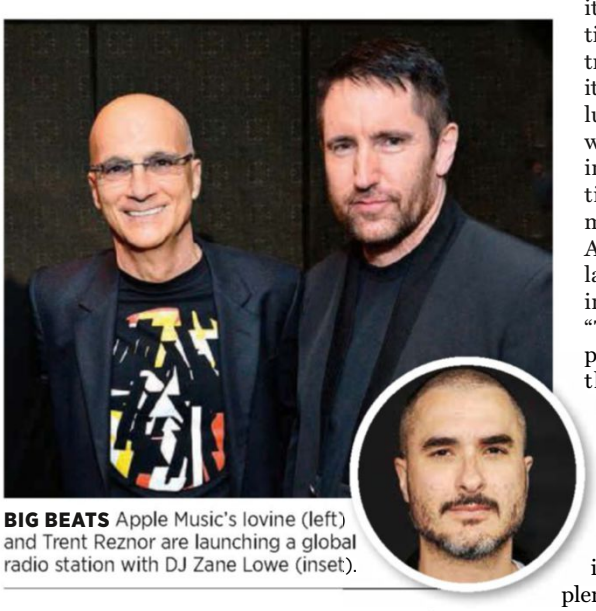
MUSIC BIZ

Can Apple Music Make Streaming Pay?

The answer may not matter. Why the tech giant might succeed in a hard business

Steve Jobs once called music streaming "bankrupt": "You could make available the Second Coming in a subscription model, and it might not be successful," the late Apple founder told Rolling Stone in 2003.

A lot has changed since then: Sales for iTunes-style downloads dropped 12.5 per cent last year, while on-demand streaming services such as Spotify have grown by more than 54 per cent. Now, the tech giant has launched Apple Music, going live in late June. CEO Tim Cook announced that it will "change the way you experience music forever" – as competitors accused Apple of coming late with a copycat product (one Rhapsody exec called the service "virtually identical" to its own).



BIG BEATS Apple Music's Iovine (left) and Trent Reznor are launching a global radio station with DJ Zane Lowe (inset).

But the big question is still: What if Jobs was right? What if enough customers will not pay the $10 per month that Apple Music and the other services need to survive? Up to now, streaming has been far from a high-profit business. Spotify has 75 million users, of which 20 million pay for its premium model. But the company's huge overhead has included $3 billion in payouts to record labels and song publishers so far. A recently leaked 2011 contract with major label Sony Music showed advance-licensing fees of $42.5 million over three years – just a taste of the enormous expenses Spotify pays to song owners – along with an onerous "most favoured nation" contract clause that ensures that Spotify's terms can only get worse. Weeks before the Apple Music announcement, Spotify added videos, podcasts and news clips to its service – a sign that it might be looking for other business models besides music streaming.

One special challenge for Apple Music: Unlike Spotify and other competitors, it does not offer a free option beyond a three-month trial period – which means it might have a harder time luring customers. To help with that, Apple is launching a live global radio station with the help of former BBC DJ Zane Lowe. Apple execs also point to the launch of the iTunes Store in 2003 as an object lesson: "They said they wouldn't pay 99 cents for a song, but they did," says software head Eddy Cue. Jimmy Iovine, who joined Apple when it bought Beats in 2014 and is helping to lead its streaming push, dismisses rivals as "utilities". "The audience has plenty of places to get free," he says, "but if you give them a good service, it will scale." And when it comes to scaling up, Apple has a head start thanks to the 800 million iTunes accounts already in existence.

In the end, Apple's biggest advantage, along with its $190 billion in cash, could be the fact that it isn't dependent on streaming – Apple Music, like the company's App Store and iTunes, ultimately exists to make products such as iPhones more appealing. "Music downloads in the iTunes store have always been a break-even venture," suggests Ben Swanson, co-owner of Secretly Group, indie-label home of Bon Iver, the War on Drugs and others. "Their primary motivation is for sticking this within their ecosystem, so you are upgrading your phones, buying the new Apple TV or using their software." If they can do that, even Steve Jobs couldn't argue with that logic.

STEVE KNOPPER



Chance in L.A.

HOT ALBUM

YOUNG RAP STAR THROWS A WICKED CURVEBALL

Chance the Rapper follows his breakout moment by joining a jazz group

After Chance the Rapper's 2013 mixtape *Acid Rap* made him one of hip-hop's hottest properties, many expected him to sign a lucrative record deal and enlist a dream team of A-list producers for his proper solo debut. Instead, he had an epiphany. "[I realised] I can do whatever I want," says the Chicago artist, 22, with a big laugh. "I don't have to do a fucking thing!"

Last year, Chance dodged expectations and joined the Social Experiment, a loose group of jazz musicians led by his pal Nico Segal, a.k.a. Donnie Trumpet. They spent the next 12 months recording their debut album, *Surf,* which arrived as a free download on iTunes in late May. Chance says he relished the opportunity to work on a project that didn't have his name up front. "It's hard to have a title in your fucking name!" he says. "When you're Chance the Rapper, it's hard to do other shit." He contributed vocal arrangements to nearly every song on *Surf,* writing full verses for some songs and just hooks on others. "It's a lot more freedom for me," he says. "There are cases where you can say a lot more in a hook than you can by making things more complex in a verse."

These days, though, he says he's come back around to liking the name Chance the Rapper, which he coined as a high school senior. "People don't want rap to be anything other than what it is," he says. "But genres expand. My contributions, no matter how they sound, will always be rap, because they'll always be black." So will there be a Chance the Rapper album anytime soon? He pauses before replying: "That's a good question. Let's say I don't know."

SIMON VOZICK-LEVINSON

FROM TOP: CHELSEA LAUREN/WIREIMAGE; ARAYA DIAZ/GETTY IMAGES FOR CINEMA PRIVE; JASON LAVERIS/FILMMAGIC

PROFILE

Hermitude's Sweet Breakthrough

The electronic duo's conquest with 'Dark Night Sweet Light' is a tale of worlds colliding

By Michael Dwyer



CHART TOPPERS Hermitude (Angus Stuart, left, and Luke Dubber)

It's been a long, inexorable haul from darkness to daylight for Hermitude. Like the rise of technology in general, it's happened so gradually that we've almost failed to notice the glow on the horizon growing day by day, as the world slowly bends to the will of the machines.

Suddenly, not unlike an episode of *Twilight Zone* set in the music business of the future, a pair of Blue Mountains studio noodlers woke up one day in May to find they'd hit the forefront of their nation's pop consciousness with an album of progressive electronica titled *Dark Night Sweet Light*.

"It's pretty weird," Luke Dubber says of their first Number One album. "I guess Angus [Stuart] and I have changed our style of music and writing and what we do over the years, but I think the world is kind of meeting us halfway too.

"You know this next wave of producers like Flume and Wave Racer and all the guys in the States who are just making a killing? They all seem so sure about what they're doing, so early in their careers. We had no idea."

Sure, the two teenagers had dreams way back when they first began dabbling at the dark fringes of funk on home recording gear – not exactly gravy train material in the mid 1990s.

Around the time they merged briefly with Urthboy's crew at the turn of the 2000s. "We wanted to be on [UK dance label] Ninja Tunes," Dubber says, "and doing gigs with DJ Shadow."

> **"I guess we've changed our style of music, but the world is meeting us halfway too ."**

Today that calibre of company surrounds them daily on escalating tours of the USA, where a cunning SoundCloud leak of "Ukiyo" got the right blogs humming last year. Remix EPs of "Through the Roof" and "The Buzz" followed, ahead of the U.S. release of *Dark Night Sweet Light* in August.

A slot at the Governor's Ball in New York in early June – cue the Black Keys, Lana Del Rey, Deadmau5, Drake and Björk – illustrated the rapid impact Hermitude have made in the U.S. since their support run with Rufus last October.

"Out of 500 people who were there to see Rufus, there were probably 50 who had heard of us – which was quite a surprise to us anyway," Dubber says. "When we came back to headline in March... we found ourselves playing in 200-person rooms and selling them out. That was awesome for us. 'Holy shit, we're selling out venues in the States!'"

It's not quite the frothing ocean of 10,000 and more goings nuts to Hermitude at last April's Groovin the Moo back home. But Dubber reports that U.S. festivals such as Lightning In a Bottle and Summer Camp treated them with unexpected respect. "We were on at seven or 7:30, even 9 o'clock, so we're finding ourselves playing to 2,000 people. There's some really good momentum."

Which all begs the question of how a pair of self-diagnosed hermits from the Australian hills came to be shaking hands with the global pop zeitgeist. By following their noses, is the short answer.

"We always tried to write something different on every album," Dubber explains. "With *Threads* [2008], we wanted to use no samples and to play everything with instruments. So we did that." *HyperParadise*, their Australian Music Prize-winning break of 2012, "was pretty much a tour through the various synthesisers we'd bought in the last 10 years".

Dark Night Sweet Light was a harder beast to pin down, but the contrast inherent in the title became key to the solution. To Luke Dubber, it's an album of two halves that bridges the trippy twilight of their cloistered studio space in inner Sydney and the bright lights of the new dance mainstream.

"We were really getting into that minimal R&B/hip-hop thing which is kind of what instrumental hip-hop has become," he says. "Once we discovered that, it just made it so much easier."

The result is a happy collision of two worlds: "Abstract, but also more mainstream," explains Dubber. "It seems to be connecting with a lot more people. I don't know whether that's because we're writing pop songs. But we definitely are writing songs that are more popular."

The Gross-Out Genius of Rose Byrne

How the dramatic actress transformed herself into a fearless comedic ace

"WHY IS SHE HERE?" THAT'S what director Nicholas Stoller remembers thinking when Rose Byrne came to audition for the part of a raunchy pop star in his 2010 comedy *Get Him to the Greek*. Stoller knew Byrne primarily as a star of the TV legal thriller *Damages*, and she looked to him more like a "model…like a lead". But her audition blew him away. "She would improv stuff that was so gross and inappropriate that [co-star] Russell Brand – who isn't someone who breaks, ever – finally cracked," Stoller recalls. "She's secretly one of the most brilliant comedians working right now."

Byrne stars in the new James Bond spoof *Spy*, giving a delightfully cruel performance as a haughty Eastern European arms dealer opposite Melissa McCarthy. ("We have a weird kind of chemistry," Byrne says of McCarthy, whom she appeared alongside in 2011's *Bridesmaids*.) Key to Byrne's comedy is her willingness to put ego aside. Take Stoller's 2014 frat-next-door flick, *Bad Neighbours*, in which the actress falls victim to a hilarious breast-pump malfunction. "[As] a woman, I get a little more scrutiny on that stuff," she says. "How often does Ben Stiller get asked, 'Wow, you did a really gross-out scene when you got your junk caught in your pants?'"



FROM AUSTRALIA WITH LOVE
Byrne in *Spy*

LARRY HORRICKS/TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX

"She would improv stuff so gross Russell Brand finally cracked," says director Nicholas Stoller.

Byrne, 35, plans to keep jumping between comedy and drama. Next year, she'll be in *X-Men: Apocalypse*, and later this year she starts filming a *Bad Neighbours* sequel. "It's funny what you do for a laugh," says Byrne. "Sometimes it's only afterward that you think, 'Oh, dear, maybe Dad shouldn't see that one.'"

MARK YARM



FIVE NOTES

Waxahatchee

THE ALABAMA-BORN SINGER DELIVERS HER SOUTHERN TAKE ON NINETIES ROCK

1 Alabama will always be her sweet home
Now based in Philadelphia, Katie Crutchfield's solo moniker comes from a creek near her childhood home, where a particular Lynyrd Skynyrd hit is as ubiquitous as ever. "That song ['Sweet Home Alabama'] is drilled into my being," says Crutchfield. "We listened to a lot of country music and classic rock growing up . . . Classic country is something I still really love."

2 She discovered Nineties music as a mid-2000s teen
A mutual friend introduced Crutchfield and her twin sister Allison to bands like Mudhoney and Bikini Kill – and she Googled the rest. "My generation was the first to be able to discover music through the internet, which is something I'm really grateful for," she says. Ex-Tiger Trap singer Rose Melberg inspired the Crutchfield sisters' first band, the Ackleys, who later morphed into P.S. Eliot. "It was poppy music, but it wasn't fashionable at the time," Crutchfield offers.

3 New album 'Ivy Tripp' features an "accidental" country song
"Under a rock" sounds like the kind of song you'd hear in a Midwestern roadhouse. "I didn't think of it as a country influenced song at all until it was finished. And then I was just like, 'Oh, we kind of accidentally made a country song.'" So will Crutchfield ever accidentally make a country record? "I hope so," she says. "I've been making records for a long time, about 10 years, so there's so many possibilities of things I'd like to try."

4 Her next record will be more introspective
Ivy Tripp was co-produced with bandmates Kyle Gilbride and Keith Spencer, but Crutchfield hopes to return to the more "honest and literal" material of Waxahatchee's 2012 debut, *American Weekend*. "I wrote that record when I was 20 years old. I've grown up a bit and I'm eager to go back to that kind of songwriting with more perspective."

5 She's bringing her mum to Australia, but not her band
Crutchfield is playing intimate solo shows in Sydney (July 3rd at Newtown Social Club) and Melbourne (July 4th at The Toff). "I'm coming solo because it's cheaper for me to do by myself than bring four other people out with all their gear," she offers. "I really love playing solo. It's a completely different experience." DARREN LEVIN





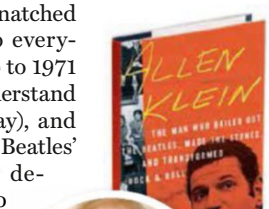
BOOKS

DEALMAKER Klein with John Lennon and Yoko Ono in 1969

Reconsidering a Music-Business Boogeyman

Allen Klein was infamous among rock managers – but a new book tells the full story

When Fred Goodman began working on a book about Allen Klein, former manager of the Beatles and the Rolling Stones, he knew he was taking on a figure many fans saw as a shady operator. Klein, after all, had snatched up the publishing rights to everything the Stones recorded up to 1971 (they claimed they didn't understand what they were signing away), and was a flashpoint during the Beatles' breakup (Paul McCartney despised Klein and wanted to hire a different manager). "I always heard he was this evil guy," says Goodman, a former Rolling Stone editor. "I felt there had to be more to the story."





Goodman

A few years ago, Klein's son Jody approached Goodman about writing a book about his father, who died from Alzheimer's disease in 2009. Jody offered access to his father's archives, as well as complete editorial control. "He made me an offer I couldn't refuse," says Goodman.

The end product, *Allen Klein: The Man Who Bailed Out the Beatles, Made the Stones and Transformed Rock & Roll*, is the first book to tell Klein's full story – from growing up in a Newark, New Jersey, orphanage to taking over Sam Cooke's career in the early 1960s, through his own downfall in the 1970s, when the music industry turned on him. Along the way, he acquired the rights to music by Cooke, the Animals and more, all of which still generate a fortune for his company, ABKCO.

Goodman discovered that Klein is far from a cartoonish villain; among other financial feats, Klein rescued the Beatles' Apple Corps, which had been bleeding money. "The artists all wanted someone like [Allen] to go fight the record companies. They wanted a bully," Goodman says. "He was aggressively advocating for artists. [In the 1960s], the notion that artists have leverage and are grossly underpaid was a revelation."

Klein was always looking out for himself, too. "His worst sin is he didn't really educate his clients," says Goodman. "He gave them what they asked for, but if he had been good and earnest he would have said, 'You're asking for the wrong thing.'"

The book is full of great anecdotes. In 1997, Klein learned the Verve's "Bitter Sweet Symphony" sampled a symphonic version of "The Last Time" without seeking the Stones' permission. Klein persuaded frontman Richard Ashcroft to sell the publishing and his rights as lyricist to ABKCO for $1,000. Klein scored big when "Bitter Sweet Symphony" became a hit. Ironically, the Stones song appeared to borrow from the Staple Singers' "This May Be the Last Time". "Fortunately for the Stones," Goodman writes, "the Staple Singers weren't managed by Allen Klein." ANDY GREENE

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: C. MAHER/"DAILY EXPRESS"/HILTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES; COURTESY; JUDITH RHODES

ALBUM PREVIEW

THE VIOLENT FEMMES PREPARE TO RECORD NEW LP

Latest EP is a hint of what to expect from reunited alt-rock outfit

It's been 15 years since the last Violent Femmes record. Yet there was zero pressure when the cult U.S. trio banged out four songs last New Year's Eve in Hobart, where bassist Brian Ritchie has lived since 2008.

"It feels like we're in the living room together, or busking," says Ritchie, 54. Recorded in one day, the *Happy New Year* EP brims with the same jumpy folk-pop sound that Violent Femmes immortalised on 1983's self-titled debut LP, which included proto-alternative classics like "Blister in the Sun" and "Gone Daddy Gone". Frontman Gordon Gano still has that distinctive whine to his voice, whether singing junkyard country, horn-kicked mariachi or bar-room ballads.



Despite the requisite inner-band turmoil, Violent Femmes released eight albums before splitting in 2009 and reuniting in 2013. They recruited new drummer Brian Viglione (Amanda Palmer's partner in the Dresden Dolls) and shared *Happy New Year* on Record Store Day before doing a wider release. Now comes work on a much-anticipated new album, their first since 2000's *Freak Magnet*.

With Gano living in Denver and Viglione in New York, they're recording in Brooklyn and considering laying down more tracks themselves in hotel rooms while touring. Who needs a producer, after all? "The producer thing is an old 20th Century idea," says Ritchie. "You just put up some microphones and play." DOUG WALLEN

Steven Tyler

On going country, 'American Idol' and the future of Aerosmith By Andy Greene



AS A CHILD SPENDING HIS summers in New Hampshire, Steven Tyler would run a 15-metre wire from the back of his radio to the top of an apple tree in order to pick up WOWO, a Fort Wayne, Indiana, station that would play some of his favourite country songs. "I'd listen to things like Johnny Horton's 'The Battle of New Orleans'," Tyler says. "I loved the Everly Brothers, Duane Eddy, Jerry Lee Lewis." More than half a century later, Tyler is connecting with his childhood love by cutting a country album in Nashville. He just released a single, "Love Is Your Name", and hopes to wrap the album after Aerosmith finish a U.S. tour in August. "I feel like a kid who just got laid for the first time," says Tyler, 67. "Sometimes doing the same-old same-old gets a little constricting."

What drew you to Nashville?

I was here two years ago to present at a few awards shows, and I just fell in love with the place. I met [Big Machine Records CEO] Scott Borchetta. He offered to sign me to his label, and the rest is history. Nashville is a mecca of song-age. I feel like one of the Three Wise Men that saw the star falling into Bethlehem.

Did you worry that some Aerosmith fans aren't going to accept you going country?

I might have, for a minute. It was kind of like taking *American Idol*. I thought, "Would Bob Dylan have taken *Idol*?" But my heart and my muse sent me here.

If Dylan can write *Nashville Skyline*...

You know what I tell Aerosmith fans? Live with it. They don't know that Dan Hicks is huge for me, and I listened to him while making our first album. It's one of the things that spurred "Big Ten Inch Record".

Are there other Aerosmith songs with a big country influence?

"Cryin'". Listen to the lyrics. It was country – we just Aerosmith'd it. And how about "I Don't Want to Miss a Thing"? Mark Chesnutt put out a country version and had a Number One hit.

What's the difference between rock and country at this point?

Country songs really spell out what's on a guy's mind in no uncertain terms. Rock & roll can be a little more aloof. But country is changing. Jaren Johnston and the Cadillac Three and Florida Georgia Line are proving that you can go any which way. Modern country might add a little a cappella or raps or heavier beats. God knows Brad Paisley plays guitar like a motherfucker. I think country is the new rock & roll – everyone is trying to stretch out.

How do the guys in Aerosmith feel about what you're doing?

I'm sure they're not happy. But Joe [Perry] has done five solo albums. I just thought, "Hey, it's my turn in the barrel." This is a side project, which has now turned into a love of life. I think we got something here that the radio would love to play. Look, that's why I'm in it. I love to take the fucking power to wow to the 100th degree. It's just what I do.

What can fans expect from the Aerosmith tour?

The best rock & roll on the planet. Joe Perry is one of the last great touring guitar legends. The energy I feel with this band is ridonculous. I feel better than I ever did. We're going to kick some ass.

How is everyone in Aerosmith getting along at this point?

Better than ever. There's always the past, but we try and keep the past out of it. When Joe gets up in my shit about something, I say, "Don't squat with your spurs on." It's a band, and it's a family. I'll do it until I come screeching to a halt, all broken and battered and can't stand up anymore. I'll scream, "Yee-haw, what a ride!"

Are Aerosmith going to record another album? Joe said recently he wasn't sure.

I don't feel that way. The end product is always the song. That's the fulfilment and the joy. The only way out is through. Whether it's down the rabbit hole and making love to Alice, I'm always coming out of the rabbit hole – of course, after having a fight with the Queen of Hearts and the fucking Cheshire Cat. That's neither here nor there, but it certainly gives me a ton of stuff to write about.

If you were still on *American Idol*, do you think it would have been cancelled?

I think it just ran its course. I love Keith Urban. I got a little peck on the cheek from J. Lo when I played the other night. That's all a man needs once a year.

Are you going to launch a tour in support of the country album?

Positively. Just not sure when. They'll be humongous shows I'll do these songs at.

You could do countrified Aerosmith songs.

Being the singer of Aerosmith, I'm not going to not do, say, "Cryin'". And "Walk This Way" with banjo is *ridiculous*.

FRANCOIS GUILLOT/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



LED-ZEPPELIN

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ATLANTIC



L.A. STATE OF MIND
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IN THE STUDIO

California Dreaming: Miguel's Wild New LP

The innovative R&B singer keeps pushing boundaries on his L.A.-themed album

Miguel Pimentel's breakout 2012 album, *Kaleidoscope Dream,* was one of the most innovative pop records of the past few years, hitting Number Three on the U.S. charts and winning a Best R&B Song Grammy for "Adorn".

For the follow-up, *Wildheart* (out July 3rd), Miguel set an ambitious goal: crafting what he calls "an ode to love of self… [and] the ongoing infatuation with whatever you're fucking into." Working with collaborators both old (*Kaleidoscope Dream* producers Pop and Oak) and new (like Benny Cassette, who worked on Kanye West's *Yeezus,* and Benny Blanco), Miguel pushed his last album's mix of rock, soul and post-Prince freakiness into stark, atmospheric territory. "This time, I wanted to have an identity as someone who's striving to push the boundaries," he says.

Kaleidoscope Dream was recorded during a two-year period in New York. For *Wildheart,* Miguel returned to his native Los Angeles. "I just wanted this album to look and feel and taste like twilight in L.A.," he says, "just light enough to see the beauty, but then dark enough for all of the sketchy shit to happen." The lyrics are also decidedly Cali-centric: "Leaves" is a love letter to California, "NWA" finds him teaming up with local rap vet Kurupt, and "A Beautiful Exit" explores L.A.'s grittier side over dark guitar crunch.

"I felt more carefree," he says of the recording process. "Not careless, but carefree."

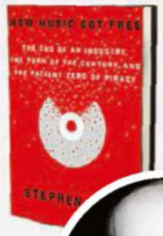
BRITTANY SPANOS

SECRET HISTORY

THE TRUE STORY OF THE MP3 REVOLUTION

New book zooms in on pirates, inventors and execs who changed music forever

For most people, the history of digital-music piracy boils down to one word: Napster. But according to Stephen Witt's new book, *How Music Got Free: The End of an Industry, the Turn of the Century, and the Patient Zero of Piracy,* the whole story is a lot more complicated – and a lot stranger. Witt's compelling account of the digital-music revolution instead focuses on lesser-known figures like Dell Glover, whom Witt calls "the greatest music pirate of all time". A North Carolina CD manufacturing-plant worker, Glover was behind the online leaks of nearly 2,000 discs, including smashes like 50 Cent's *Get Rich or Die Tryin',* during an approximately seven-year run that ended up landing him in prison for three months. "If you've ever pirated music, it's almost certain that somewhere in your collection you have songs that go back to this one guy," Witt says.





Witt

The other main characters in Witt's book are German audio engineer Karlheinz Brandenburg, chief architect of the MP3, whom Witt hails as "the visionary father of contemporary streaming technology", and legendary record executive Doug Morris, the erstwhile head of Universal Music Group. Morris epitomised the industry's disastrous response to piracy, urging the RIAA to take a hard line against Napster and spending tens of millions on Pressplay, an online music store that turned out to be a huge flop. These narratives, says Witt, 36, help tell the larger "story of how my entire generation got online for the first time and what that looked like". Though Witt is a fan of streaming, he gets nostalgic for the old days when anything was possible. "It was fun to live through the Wild West of the Internet," he says.

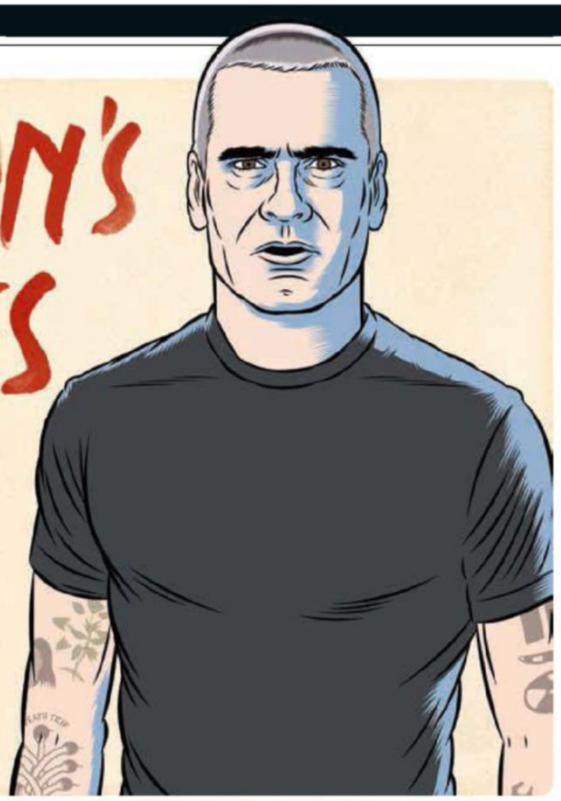
MARK YARM

FROM TOP: ANTHONY WILLIAMS; CHAD GRIFFITH

A FAN'S NOTES

BY HENRY ROLLINS

Our man in the van takes on the "non-issue" of gay marriage



I LOVE AUSTRALIA. MY AFFECTION for your country was immediate upon arrival in Sydney in 1989. I don't know exactly what happened in those first jet-lagged hours, but it was profound. In the days that followed, meeting Australians and hearing so many great bands – it was set in stone.

The topic of same sex is currently booming in your national conversation. Same in America. It's a heated, seemingly unending discussion. I think the idea of two men or women getting married is as relevant as a man and woman getting married. Two people love each other and want to make it official. Life is short, so do what you can to make it as happy as possible. The only other thing I can add is that in my opinion, at least in America, all this is dealt with clearly in the First, Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments of the Constitution. They are powerful, concise and exquisitely written.

"A 'good cop' states that they hate the sin but not the sinner."

The tragic comedy part of this non-issue comes from those who oppose same sex marriage. They assert that they are sane, rational and considerate, and then follow up with some real stone age anti-logic. "Men will start marrying their sons!" They will, for the benefit of operating video cameras, state that homosexuality is equivalent to bestiality and pedophilia! These are the "bad cops" of the debate. Then, a "good cop" comes in and states that they "hate the sin but not the sinner", but the message is clear: you degenerate queers keep your mitts off our enshrined ritual.

You may be one of these people. Obviously you are entitled to your own opinion but so am I. I think you have needs: You need to evolve. You need to get a life. You need to understand that your freedom is only as valid as the freedom you allow others.

The following arguments have no credibility: same sex marriage impugns the integrity of traditional marriage. Wrong. Divorce does. Same sex marriage will lead to people marrying anything. I've tried to marry pizza, but it just keeps saying, "Eat me!" and so I do. Same sex marriage will inspire others to adopt the "homosexual lifestyle". Do you really equate your heterosexuality with some intellectual heft that you think you possess, some innate decency and unerring moral compass that others have eschewed in favour of a different orientation? Do you think homosexuals choose this trait, the same way you "chose" to be "straight"? Let's be clear. You are not decent. You are not fair or just.

Australia has the opportunity to be not only on the right side of history but human decency. The fact that an overwhelming majority of Americans favour marriage equality is one of the only indicators that it has embraced modernity. Don't get stuck in a dark age of your own making. Everyone's watching.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: ILLUSTRATION BY MICHAEL WELDON; JON KOPALOFF/FILMMAGIC

EXPERT OPINION

Nate Ruess

We asked the fun. frontman – whose solo debut, *Grand Romantic,* came out last month – to tell us what he thinks of five songs.

OLD

Elton John
"Ballad of a Well-Known Gun"
This is a little more bluesy than the Elton John I'm accustomed to, but it's great. He sounds amazing.

Smashing Pumpkins
"Cherub Rock"
Billy Corgan is freaking phenomenal on guitar. Every single thing on this is a hook.

NEW

Nicki Minaj feat. Beyoncé
"Feeling Myself"
This is the perfect song if you have ADD. The way Nicki says "laser" is so cool and memorable.

Titus Andronicus
"Dimed Out"
Thank you for introducing me to the best song of the year. It's tough to even listen to any other song. The energy is perfect, and the bridge is spectacular. I want to get a tattoo of those lyrics across my face.

Diet Cig
"Breathless"
The best band name I've ever heard. This song is structurally awesome – it's barely two minutes, which is such a great length. I was begging for more by the time it was over.





LIVIN' ON THE ROAD Haggard and Nelson in Texas last year

DANNY CLINCH

ENCOUNTER

Willie and Merle Ride Again

On the bus as country heroes talk new LP and swap Johnny Cash stories By Patrick Doyle

"HELLO, I KNOW YOU!" MERLE Haggard says as he emerges from the bedroom of his tour bus. He's talking to Willie Nelson, who's sitting in the bus's cramped front quarters. Standing nearby, Nelson's wife, Annie, asks the pair if they'll sign a couple of acoustic guitars for a charity run by Matthew McConaughey, a friend of the family. "Absolutely not," Haggard says with a smile. Later, when Annie takes a photo of the two signing the guitars, Nelson grins and gives the camera the finger.

It's a perfect Saturday night in South Texas, where Haggard, 78, and Nelson, 82, are playing the last of three sold-out shows together at New Braunfels' Whitewater Amphitheater. Haggard is about to play a set, during which Nelson will join him on "Okie From Muskogee", "Pancho and Lefty" and a handful of other songs. Backstage, Nelson family members catch up; his rail-thin 90-year-old roadie Ben Dorcy (who was once John Wayne's assistant) ambles around, smoking a pipe. Directly behind the stage, locals ride down the Guadalupe River in inner tubes, stopping on the bank to listen to the show. "We'll get somebody out there to sell them tickets," Nelson jokes.

Sitting side by side on the bus, Nelson and Haggard look like they could be a grizzled Mount Rushmore of country music. "It's a mutual-admiration society with us," says Nelson. "Merle's one of the best. There's not anyone out there that can beat him. Maybe Kris Kristofferson. But then you start running out of names."

Haggard and Nelson have just released a new LP, *Django and Jimmie*. (The title is a tribute to Nelson's and Haggard's respective heroes, Django Reinhardt and Jimmie Rodgers.)

One of the best songs is "Missing Ol' Johnny Cash", an ode to their late friend and a meditation on mortality. "There's a thousand good stories about John," says Nelson. Haggard tells one, about the time Cash thought it would be hilarious to dynamite a broken-down car he encountered on the side of the road. "He hooks it all up, hits the plunger and blows it up. And he said, 'Now, when that guy goes to tell his old lady his car blew up, he won't be lying!'" Nelson cackles, adding, "John used to say, 'I always get my best thinking done when June is talking.'"

> **"I didn't know anything about marijuana," Haggard says. "It's fantastic."**

Nelson and Haggard met at a poker game at Nelson's Nashville house in 1964, when both were struggling songwriters looking for their big break. (Neither would have major success until they left Nashville behind; Nelson for Austin, Haggard for Bakersfield, California.) They didn't become close until the late Seventies, when they were playing casinos in Reno. "We'd play a couple of long shows a day, then spend all night long jamming," says Haggard.

In 1982, they recorded *Pancho & Lefty* together at Nelson's ranch near Austin, where they'd stay awake for days – "We were living pretty hard in that time period," Nelson has said – playing golf and then recording all night (Haggard barely remembers singing his famous verse on "Pancho and Lefty"). At the time, they were fasting on a master-cleanse regimen of cayenne pepper and lemon juice. "I think Willie went 10 days," says Haggard. "I went seven."

"I still ain't got over it," says Nelson. "Still hungry." Adds Haggard, "You're still high!"

These days, they share a love of conspiracy theories (both are devoted fans of paranormal-obsessed radio host Art Bell) and making music with their children (Haggard's son Ben plays guitar in his band; Nelson's sons Lukas and Micah frequently join their father onstage). "It's as good as it gets, to have your kids up there playing," says Nelson. "And they're good!"

On the new album, the two cover Bob Dylan's "Don't Think Twice (It's Alright)". The track was recorded before Dylan criticised Haggard and other artists in a widely publicised MusiCares speech in February: "Merle Haggard didn't think much of my songs, but Buck Owens did," Dylan said. "Buck Owens and Merle Haggard? If you have to have somebody's [*Cont. on 28*]

TAME IMPALA

CURRENTS

OUT 17 JULY

OF MONSTERS AND MEN

BENEATH THE SKIN





NEW ALBUM OUT NOW

INCLUDES

CRYSTALS AND EMPIRE

WILLIE AND MERLE

[*Cont. from 26*] blessing – you figure it out." Dylan later apologised.

Haggard (who toured with Dylan in 2005) thinks Dylan was talking about the Merle Haggard of the Sixties – the guy who took shots at hippies, weed and premarital sex in 1969's "Okie From Muskogee".

"I didn't misunderstand Bob," says Haggard. "I know what he meant. He figured I was lumping him in with hippies [in the Sixties]. The lack of respect for the American military hurt my feelings at the time. But I never lumped Bob Dylan in with the hippies. What made him great was the fact that everybody liked him. And I'll tell you one thing, the goddamn hippies have got no exclusive on Bob Dylan!" He pauses. "Bob likes to box – I'd like to get in the ring with his ass, and give him somebody to hit."

In fact, these days Merle Haggard is far more liberal than the man in his classic songs. For one thing, he loves pot. "I didn't know anything about marijuana back then," he says. "It's one of the most fantastic things in the world." Did he and Nelson smoke in the studio? "Are you kidding me?" Haggard laughs.

Soon, the conversation devolves to jokes. "You know what you call a guitar player without a girlfriend?" Nelson asks. "Homeless."

Next, they talk current events, Nelson explaining the "Blurred Lines" lawsuit to Haggard. ("They stole more than they were supposed to," he says. Haggard nods.) Asked if either has any thoughts about communicating with fans through social media, they shake their heads. "Just so long as somebody else can do it," says Nelson. "That's why I didn't learn to play steel guitar."

"What was that little girl that played steel in Asleep at the Wheel?" says Haggard. "Cindy Cashdollar. Everybody was trying to look up her dress."

"Oh, I wouldn't do that," deadpans Nelson. "I think I had the wrong angle."

By now, Haggard is supposed to be onstage; his son has been extending his three-song warm-up set for several minutes, telling the crowd his father will be out soon. These co-headline dates sold so well that Nelson says there will be more: "In fact, I was talking to some folks today – I was gonna see what they thought of making us do a tour."

He turns to Haggard. "We ought to do whatever we can get – as many days as we need to," Nelson says with a smile. "Because I know it's a good record. I think it might sell a couple."



BOWERY BOY
Malin in London this year

CHECKING IN

One Man's Mission to Save NYC Rock

Jesse Malin takes on 'spiritual gentrification' with new LP – and still sees hope for his city

JESSE MALIN SEES A LOT OF ghosts on the once-bohemian streets of New York's East Village: late icons, all neighbourhood regulars, like Allen Ginsberg, Joey Ramone and Lou Reed. Malin, a local fixture who has just released the powerful street-wise-rock album *New York Before the War*, also sees a lot of possibility amid the boutique hotels and velvet-rope clubs now lining the Bowery.

"I walk around here and still get ideas," the singer, 47, says, sitting in a First Avenue cafe a few blocks from the old space where his first band, Heart Attack, lived on outdated yogurt and slept on lawn chairs during the Eighties-hardcore explosion. New skyscrapers are "destroying the city", Malin concedes. He refers to a nearby Whole Foods as "Whole Paycheque". But Malin says the war on his new LP, in songs like "Addicted" and "Turn Up the Mains", is against "spiritual gentrification. We're all infiltrated by the same corporate, disposable stuff. It's about holding on to what you value, the culture you come from."

The album focuses on "holding on to what you value, the culture you come from".

Malin has put his money where his heart is, investing in his neighbourhood's rock & roll soul. In the mid-Nineties, while in the glam-punk band D Generation, he used part of a record-deal advance to open Coney Island High, a garage-rock haven on St. Mark's Place. After high rent and legal action by the city (based on an old cabaret law that banned dancing) forced the venue to close in 1999, Malin and Ryan Adams drummer Johnny T opened Niagara, a now-popular bar on the site of the fabled punk club A7. They are also partners in the live-music club Bowery Electric, founded in 2009 up the street from the former CBGB.

Born in Queens, raised by a single mum, Malin says he is a high school graduate with "a seventh-grade education. I don't know if I have any business sense. I do what I like. Somehow it's worked out by need and passion." Malin, who ends the new album with the ballad "Bar Life", notes that on tour, after a show, he always looks "for a place to hear a good DJ, have a couple of beers and talk to people about what's happening on the street. That's part of rock & roll for me. There's dark stuff in the world. But we find a way to own it, sing about it and have a place to defuse it."

DAVID FRICKE

LORNE THOMSON/REDFERNS VIA GETTY IMAGES

CHECKING IN

Seth Sentry Marches Into the Future

On turning 30, feeling dumb and getting personal on LP 2

JUNE 5TH, 2015: IT'S RELEASE day for Melbourne rapper Seth Sentry's second album, *Strange New Past*, and the laidback MC is in a buoyant mood – partly due, he says, to internet avoidance. "I'm trying to read books now – my instinct is to get on my Facebook page and click refresh and Google my own fuckin' name for hours," he laughs. We caught up with Sentry on the eve of an expansive 48-date Australian tour.

It's been three years since your debut, 'This Was Tomorrow'. What's been the biggest change since then?

I turned 30 – that was really hard for some reason. Up until that point I was still working in hospitality and I went from being a part-time rapper and full-time waiter to the opposite. I dunno, it just rattled me.

New track 'Dumb' is quite self-deprecating. Do you genuinely feel that stupid?

It depends who you're around! That song came about when I was watching *Are You Smarter Than a 5th Grader?*, and this little punk kid got everything right, and I didn't know any of them. Fuck you, kid! [Laughs]

'Violin' is about your difficult relationship with your father. Was it a hard song to write?



COMING OF AGE "I'd rather talk about wanking than hoverboards!" says Sentry.

That's without a doubt the toughest song I've ever written. It was hard because I wanted to write what I wanted to say to him, but I had to think about what repercussions it might have among my family. I haven't listened to it since I finished it. I don't see my Dad, but I hope he hears it.

Your 2012 breakout song 'Dear Science' had you questioning where your hoverboard was. Are you still getting asked about hoverboards?

You get high and write a dumb song and don't even think about it, and then it becomes "I have to talk about this in every single interview for the rest of my life!" There's a wanking story on this new album. That's how over it I am – I'd rather talk about wanking than hoverboards! JAMES JENNINGS

COMEBACK

VERUCA SALT FACE THEIR GHOSTS ON NEW LP



Gordon, second left, and Post, second right

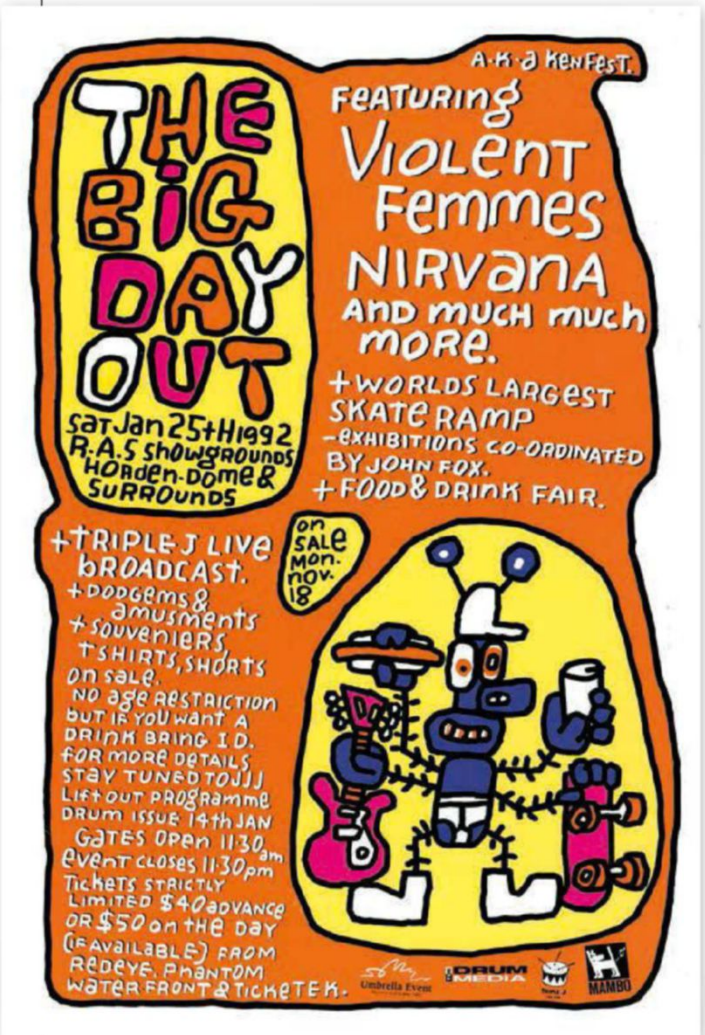
When Nina Gordon left Veruca Salt in 1998 – the band she'd formed with best friend Louise Post just five years prior – the relationship between the co-vocalists/guitarists was so strained that the pair didn't speak for 14 years. "We had a lot of success really quickly, and we didn't have the tools to handle it," admits Post. "Now we're like, 'Why didn't we just get into a fistfight like Mick and Keith and just get back to work?'"

Post and Gordon reconciled in 2012 and reunited with drummer Jim Shapiro and bassist Steve Lack, the same line-up behind the band's first two albums and 1994 grunge anthem "Seether". For anyone wanting the gory details about the acrimonious split, Gordon says it's all on new LP, *Ghost Notes*: "It's a complete picture of what pulled us apart and what brought us back together and it answers the questions everyone has been asking us about what really happened."

Post says the band are now having more fun than ever. "All of this has just been a joyride for us – we've had this incredible opportunity to heal old wounds and play music together again. We don't know what's in the future, but for now it feels like our victory lap." J.J.

COURTESY, 2







COLLECTION

A Visual History of the Touring Circuit in Australia

1200-page boxset of tour posters chronicles thousands of gigs over 50 years

When James Anfuso's collection of tour and gig posters reached 10,000 four years ago, he knew he had to do something with them rather than just leave them stored in filing cabinets. That "moment of clarity" resulted in *Rockin Australia: 50 Years Of Concert Posters 1957-2007*, a just-released three-volume, 1200-page boxset featuring 2252 Australian concert posters, all from Anfuso's archives. Weighing in at 13 kilograms and retailing for $349, the labour of love has been self-funded, and is limited to a very rock & roll 666 copies. "Unlike the USA and UK, where rock & roll posters were collected as early as the late-Fifties, poster collecting in Australia was until recently virtually unknown," he explains. "As a result many tour/gig posters failed to survive or are buried in someone's garage. I've spent the last 30 years searching for these lost treasures so they can be preserved and shared with others."



TOUR LIFE
Poster collector James Anfuso

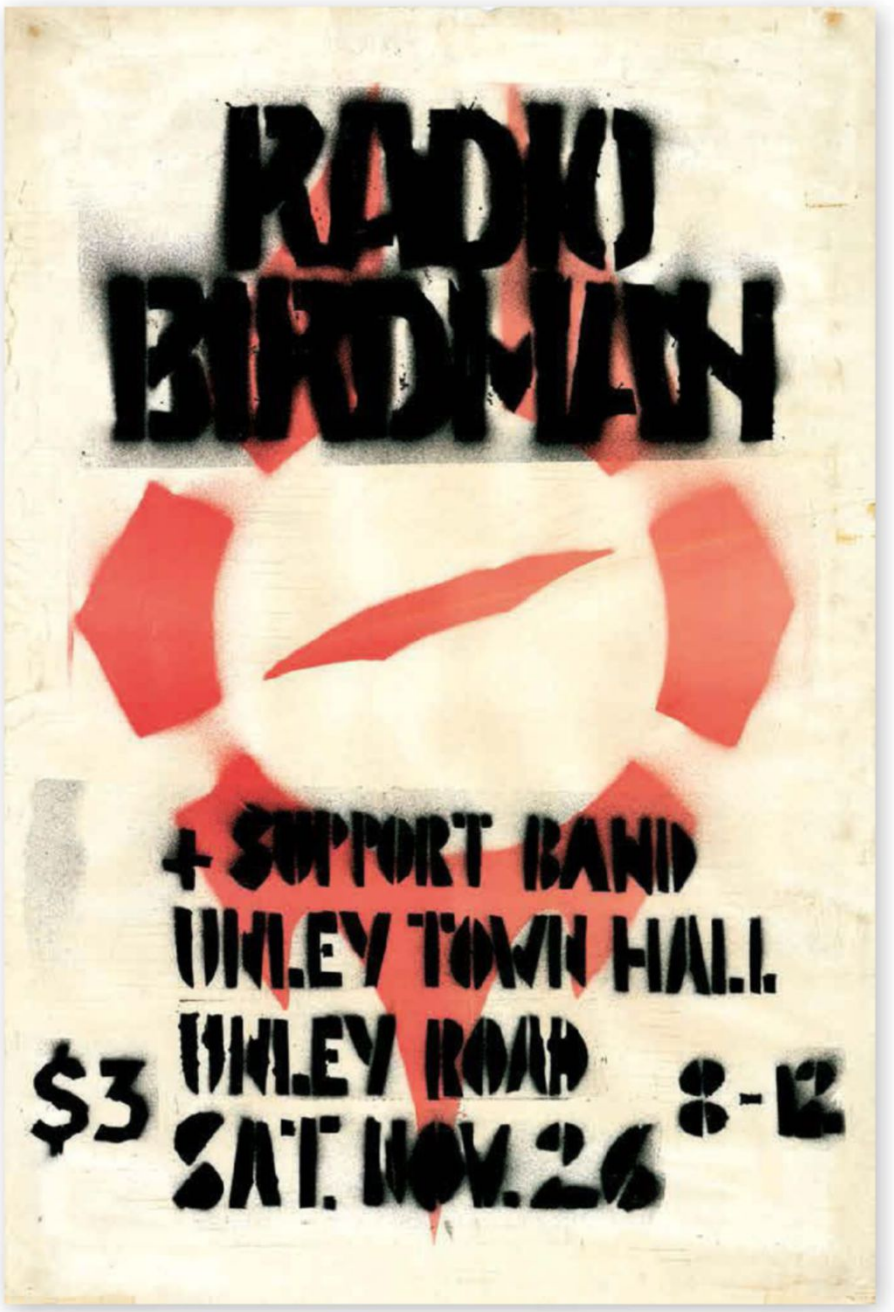
Featuring posters from artists as diverse as Abba, David Cassidy, Led Zeppelin and Radio Birdman, the publication of the book doesn't put a full-stop on Anfuso's collecting. "In the back of Volume 3 I've included a 'Wants' list in the hope some of them might surface," he says, "or someone might be able to [prove] whether or not they existed."

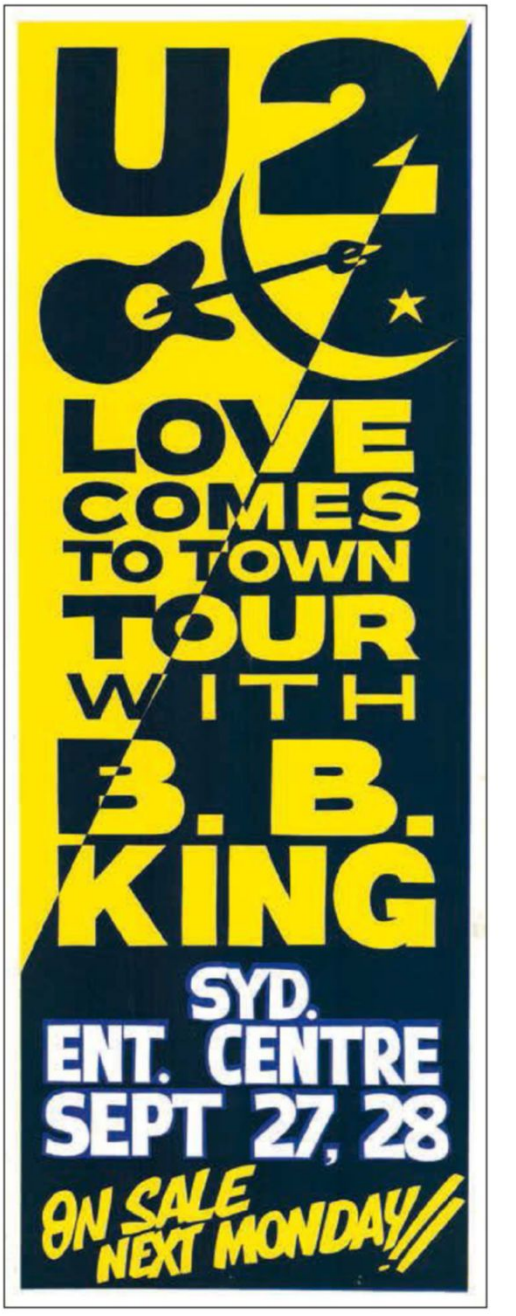
ROD YATES



WORK OF ART
Above: The *Rockin Australia* boxset and, across this spread, some of the 2252 posters included in its 1200 pages. "I've spent the last 30 years searching for these lost treasures," says James Anfuso.




RADIO BIRDMAN
+ SUPPORT BAND
UNLEY TOWN HALL
UNLEY ROAD
$3 SAT. NOV. 26 8-12


U2
LOVE COMES TO TOWN TOUR WITH B. B. KING
SYD. ENT. CENTRE
SEPT 27, 28
ON SALE NEXT MONDAY!!


METALLICA
ON SALE MONDAY FEB 15
MONDAY, MARCH 29
BRISBANE - ENT CENTRE


Friday 17th March
Pink Floyd
RANDWICK RACECOURSE
BOOKINGS: ALL AGENTS

PROFILE

Kacey Walks the Line

Kacey Musgraves could be a country superstar. But only if she gets to do it her way

By Patrick Doyle



COUNTRY'S SLYEST REBEL Musgraves in Nashville last month

"DO YOU WANT ANYTHING TO drink?" Kacey Musgraves asks one recent afternoon. "I've been really into gin and tonics lately." Still wearing her gym clothes – a white tank top and leggings – Musgraves is giving a tour of her modest two-storey home in East Nashville. It's full of mementos from the past few years, including a signed copy of a Loretta Lynn album and an autographed ROLLING STONE from 1978 with Willie Nelson on the cover (it's signed, mistakenly, "To Katie"). Near the kitchen, a poster reads BELIEVE IN YOUR FUCKING SELF. STAY UP ALL FUCKING NIGHT.

When she's not on the road, Musgraves like to watch *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt* ("It's the funniest shit I've ever seen," she says) or hang with her boyfriend, Misa Arriaga, who is also the guitarist in her band. Or she might hit the inflatable hot tub on the porch with her friends. "It's probably the most redneck decision I've ever made," she says of the purchase.

Right now, Musgraves, 26, is dealing with headaches surrounding her new album, *Pageant Material*. She says her label wants to push the release date from June to September ("Not gonna happen," she says). They also take issue with a key line in her single "Biscuits": "Pissing in my yard ain't gonna make yours any greener." The label wants to change "pissing" to "spitting". "I'm like, 'Sorry, no'," she says. "People are so worried about offending that they water down everything. Come to a show, and that's the line everyone loves. Don't take that away from me!"

Musgraves has been through this before. In 2012, she was discouraged from releasing "Merry Go Round" as her debut single. The song was a bleak portrait of the monotony and heartache of life in small-town America. "I was advised it's not something that a new artist should say," she says. "I'm like, 'That's exactly why I want to say it!'"

Musgraves released "Merry Go Round" anyway, and it went on to win a Grammy for Best Country Song. Musgraves also took home the Best Country Album Grammy that night (for 2013's *Same Trailer Different Park*), beating out Taylor Swift. ("I told you," Swift mouthed to her friend Ed Sheeran after she lost.) The album earned Musgraves fans ranging from Katy Perry to Willie Nelson, both of whom Musgraves opened for in the same summer. "She's a huge talent – I'm a big fan," says Nelson, who eventually learned her name.

"I see gay couples at my shows all the time. In the country world, that's rare. But it makes me proud."

With down-home good looks, a Katy Perry-like visual aesthetic – her stage sets feature light-up cowgirl outfits and neon cacti – and a gift for spare, folky melodies, Musgraves has broad appeal. But she also has a rebellious streak that makes her stand out from her peers. Her 2013 single "Follow Your Arrow" playfully championed both weed and same-sex hookups. "I see gay couples at my shows all the time.

Photograph by CHRISTOPHER WRAY-MCCANN

In the country world, that's rare, which is sad. But it makes me proud."

At the Country Music Awards last year, she made headlines for appearing to snub Tim Tebow when he reached for a handshake. Also last year, she got into a Twitter feud with country radio DJ Bobby Bones, who called her "rude" after an interview. "It's so stupid," Musgraves says. "People want artists to be transparent and real until they do something that is actually real."

Musgraves grew up in Golden, Texas (pop. 398), an idyllic town that holds a Sweet Potato Festival every October. Her grandmother lived next door, and her parents owned a print shop nearby – her mother, Karen, still makes Western-and-wildlife-themed canvases and pillows. On weekends, the family would hop in a minivan and hit the "Opry Circuit". Kacey dressed as a cowgirl and sang Patsy Cline and Hank Williams songs with a house band at small theatres like the Greenville Opry or the Mesquite Opry. "She was this yodelling queen in Texas, and she was famous for that," says friend and fellow songwriter Maren Morris, who met Musgraves as a teenager.

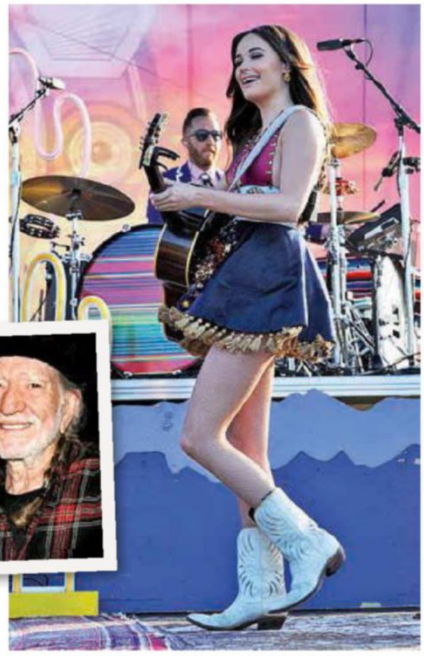
By her early teens, Musgraves had released two locally recorded albums with songs like "Life of an Old Cowhand" and "Whatever Happened to the Yodelin' Cowgirls?" "I look back now and I'm like, 'Oh, my God, that's so cheesy. I sound like a chipmunk.'"

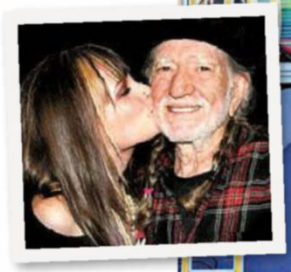
Musgraves went through an emo phase – "I got really into Dashboard Confessional," she says – before becoming serious about country songwriting around age 15. She was partly inspired by the success of Miranda Lambert, a family friend who grew up in nearby Lindale. "I think Miranda is the reason Kacey decided to go with country," says John DeFoore, who taught guitar and songwriting to both Lambert and Musgraves.

At 18, Musgraves came to Nashville after making it through an audition for the singing competition *Nashville Star*. She finished seventh. "I prefer a more organic approach to music," she says. "Nobody even remembers that I did that, so it's fine." Musgraves got a job dressing as cartoon characters for birthday parties but says she quit after she was asked to show up to a party for Blake Shelton dressed as a French maid. "It was very short-lived," she says.

After playing open mics for a while, Musgraves scored a job as a staff songwriter for Warner Bros./Chappell, where she clocked in weekdays and was paired with one or two co-writers. She became friends with Shane McAnally and Luke Laird, who have written dozens of chart-topping country hits between them. The pair helped her write much of *Same Trailer Different Park*. "She can write some of the most clever lyrics that I've ever heard in Nashville," says Laird. "There's always a little twist that makes it not just another country song."

Pageant Material sounds like little else coming out of Music Row. Instead of slick production and trend-hopping songs, Musgraves aims for the plainspoken poetry of heroes like John Prine and Roger Miller. "[Label executives will say], 'We need an uptempo for summer, and it needs to be this long.' It's like, 'What happened to just a good song?'" she says. "I don't remember the last time I thought, 'I would love to hear an uptempo right now.'"





FOLLOW YOUR ARROW Onstage in June (above) and with fellow Texan Nelson (inset).

Musgraves is already thinking about her next album. "The next one will be completely different," she says, "because I don't think this one is very far off from *Different Trailer*. I would really like to write to a concept next time. I'd really like to do a reggae record, or a surf-rock record."

Some critics have wondered if Musgraves could be the next Taylor Swift, bolting country for pop domination. "I like Taylor's new album, *1989*," Musgraves says. "It's really fun to listen to when you're working out. I think it's great that she's doing what she wants on her own terms. But she's way more exposed than I'd ever want to be. That's not a slight to her. I like my life the way it is."

FROM LEFT: COURTESY OF KACEY MUSGRAVES; J. COHEN/GETTY IMAGES; DAVID M. BENETT/GETTY IMAGES

Q&A

RONNIE WOOD REVISITS HIS LOST SIXTIES TOUR DIARY



Wood

Before Ronnie Wood joined the Rolling Stones, he made his name as a guitarist with the Faces and the Jeff Beck Group – and before that, as a teenager in West London, he played in a bluesy group called the Birds. Wood, 68, recently discovered his personal diary from a tour with that band in 1965, when he was 17. He fleshed it out with new reminiscences and illustrations for a new book, *How Can It Be?* (out now in limited edition, with a wider release this spring).

What were the crowds like at your shows in 1965?
Heavy emphasis on the girls. You gauged how well you were doing if they screamed. It took us ages to warm them up sometimes. You had to convert these unbelievers to let their hair down a bit.

A few of the entries mention partying with Keith Moon. What was that like?
He was a hell-raiser, but a hell of a gentleman at the same time [*laughs*]. The Who were very encouraging to us. One night they came out to this tiny dive just outside London where all the bands used to play. We were onstage, and they were shouting up from the crowd, "We're Number One!" We were going, "You bastards!" It was a friendly rivalry.

You're five years sober now, but did you drink much back then?
Those were the days of experimenting with scotch and Coke, and brandy. It used to bounce off us – that and all the travel we did in the van. If I had to do it now, I probably wouldn't last a week.

Do you find it hard to stay away from alcohol on the road these days?
It gets easier. The first few months, I thought, "Oh, God, how am I ever gonna get through this?" But now I see everything in a different light, and more clearly.

It's been 40 years since your first tour with the Stones. What do you make of that milestone?
It's as though no time at all has passed. Once you're over 30, time just flies, anyway. I just can't believe I'm 68. I still feel like that kid in '65.

SIMON VOZICK-LEVINSON



SCENE STEALER Osment (right) with Billy Bob Thornton and Jeremy Piven in *Entourage*

REBIRTH

Haley Joel Osment's Surprising Second Act

How the kid who saw dead people reinvented himself as an oddball character actor

At one point in the "Entourage" movie, a bearded, longhaired young man in a hotel suite watches two women have sex with each other, then slaps one on the ass while trying to eject superagent-turned-studio-boss Ari Gold from the room. It might take you a minute to notice that the playboy in question is Haley Joel Osment, a former child actor known for starring in Steven Spielberg's *A.I.* and in *The Sixth Sense*, where he uttered the morbid catchphrase "I see dead people." "A lot of people don't recognise me until the credits," says Osment, 27, who gives a riotous performance as the wild son of a billionaire movie financier. "That's really exciting for an actor."



In *The Sixth Sense*

Osment's acting gigs had started drying up around the time he hit puberty. Even worse, it looked as if he was going to follow the bad example of many other former child stars. In 2006, he flipped his car after hitting a mailbox. The result was a DUI, a broken rib, three years' probation and a mug shot that went viral on the Internet. "That was being a teenager making a terrible decision," he says.

It turned out to be an isolated incident, and not long afterward Osment put his acting career on hold to attend NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. "Having that college experience and a social life that didn't revolve around Hollywood was absolutely crucial," he says.

Osment has been working steadily since graduating in 2011, but it's been mainly in under-the-radar projects like Kevin Smith's *Tusk* and the 2014 indie flick *Sex Ed*. He thought the *Entourage* role was a long shot. "It was in really high demand, so I didn't put much expectations on it," he says.

Today, Osment splits his time between Los Angeles and New York, and he loves to check out indie acts like Flying Lotus, Joey Badass and Little Dragon. He can't even remember the last time someone approached him and said, "I see dead people"; the fact he looks little like his cherubic child self may have helped him score more oddball projects. "I've done some really off-the-wall stuff, and stuff that people might not expect," he says. "That's one way to work through people's expectations of you."

Next, Osment has roles in Smith's *Yoga Hosers* and the Will Ferrell comedy miniseries *The Spoils Before Dying*, and he can't wait to see what opportunities will arise for him now *Entourage* has hit theatres. "Most of the opinion on the Internet is that [the *Entourage* role] is just a cameo," he says. "But the character is pretty integral to the path that the movie takes. The whole thing is just totally surreal."

ANDY GREENE

JAMIE XX: A DANCE STAR IS BORN

How the indie-pop guy unleashed his inner club god

Last year, while the xx were in New York for an unusually intimate 11-night residency – performing for just 45 people at a time in the cavernous Park Avenue Armory – the U.K. indie-pop band's resident producer, Jamie xx, snuck away and bought a vintage synth. "It's quite a rare thing, an old Oberheim from the Seventies," he says. He shipped the instrument back to his London home



Jamie xx

and ended up using it to make "Gosh", the irresistible opener of his solo debut, *In Colour*. "That's one of the best times I've ever had in the studio," he says. "It was so natural." The album is the fullest expression yet of Jamie's taste in hip-hop and dance music (previously heard most notably on his house-tinged beat for Drake and Rihanna's 2011 hit "Take Care"), with guest vocals from red-hot Atlanta rapper Young Thug, Jamaican dancehall star Popcaan and more. It all adds up to a joyful, genre-less style that's very 2015. "I used to think about who would be listening to my music," he says. "Then I stopped doing that, and I was able to make this album."

SIMON VOZICK-LEVINSON

FROM LEFT: CLAUDETTE BARIUS/WARNER BROS. PICTURES; SPYGLASS ENTERTAINMENT; MATT COWAN/GETTY IMAGES

TRIBUTE

The Man Who Set Jazz Free

Ornette Coleman broke all the rules and inspired musicians from Coltrane to Sonic Youth

'His playing has a real purity about it, a real beauty," Jerry Garcia of the Grateful Dead said of the iconoclastic alto saxophonist Ornette Coleman in 1989. Garcia had just played on the latter's album *Virgin Beauty,* a complex, radiant showcase for Coleman's idea of free jazz: defying conventional laws of harmony, melody and rhythm in the pursuit of an individual, ecstatic voice. Coleman, who died on June 11th in New York at age 85 of cardiac arrest, coined a name for his music: harmolodics. But Garcia recalled Coleman trying to explain his vision during a session for that LP: "Finally, he said, 'Oh, just go ahead and play, man.' And I thought, 'Oh, I get it now.'"



NO BOUNDARIES
Coleman in 1983

Coleman's titanic impact on jazz as a composer, improviser and lifelong outsider can be measured in the truth of album titles like *Something Else!!!!,* his 1958 debut, and 1960's *Change of the Century.* "Even in jazz, there are rules of engagement – Ornette shook up that orthodoxy," says Living Colour guitarist Vernon Reid, who played with drummer and Coleman alumnus Ronald Shannon Jackson. "And a lot of people did not get it." The exuberant turmoil of Coleman's groups and his searing tone on alto sax, grounded in gospel and the blues of his native Texas, polarised the jazz community in the late Fifties and Sixties. Miles Davis claimed Coleman was "all screwed up inside"; John Coltrane became a disciple and collaborator.

The liberating force of Coleman's music had an equally dramatic, transforming effect on rock. "I used to run around the Village following Ornette Coleman wherever he played," said Lou Reed, whose free-rock guitar work in the Velvet Underground was inspired by Coleman's soloing. The Dead's collective improvising, the directed chaos of Captain Beefheart's 1969 album *Trout Mask Replica,* and New York post-punk bands like Sonic Youth and Defunkt all reflected Coleman's innovations.

Born on March 9th, 1930, in Fort Worth, Coleman led his first combos in Los Angeles in the Fifties, starting long relationships with bassist Charlie Haden and trumpeter Don Cherry. The 1960 LP *Free Jazz* became synonymous with an emerging avant-garde, but Coleman resisted definition: composing the symphony *Skies of America*; recording in Morocco with the Master Musicians of Jajouka in 1973; revving up his R&B roots with guitars in the band Prime Time with his son Denardo on drums; and making a 1986 LP, *Song X,* with guitarist Pat Metheny.

Coleman's imprint was summarised at a 2014 tribute concert in Brooklyn featuring saxophonist Sonny Rollins, guitarist Thurston Moore and Patti Smith. But Coleman was always certain his music would be understood. "I have always wanted to go into the mainstream," he said in 1989. "But I didn't want to sacrifice what I was doing to get there." DAVID FRICKE

Allan Fryer

The Heaven singer took the Australian metallers to the brink of success in America

Lead singer for Heaven, Allan Fryer – who died on June 4th, aged 60 – was also the man who might have replaced the late Bon Scott in AC/DC in 1980. In his memoir *Dog Eat Dog*, Heaven manager Michael Browning wrote that Fryer had told him George Young had recorded his vocals to gauge his candidacy after Scott's death. When the AC/DC gig went to Brian Johnson, Fryer shifted to Sydney and formed Heaven. After recording 1982's *Twilight of Mischief* for Browning's Deluxe label, they relocated to America, touring heavily and opening for Judas Priest, Mötley Crüe and Kiss, whose Gene Simmons expressed interest in producing the band. Future releases followed – 1983's *Where Angels Fear To Tread*, featuring a cameo from Ronnie James Dio, and 1985's *Knockin' on Heaven's Door* – but the band folded soon after.



Fryer

"A loveable guy", according to Browning, Fryer remained in America, living in Texas, sometimes fronting Heaven reunion gigs, including a 2001 Australian tour with Judas Priest. He died after a lengthy battle with cancer. JEFF APTER

FROM TOP: /AFP/GETTY IMAGES; RS ARCHIVES

MY SOUNDTRACK

Ben Lee

The singer-songwriter on "the perfection of harmony" and his under-developed guitar skills By Rod Yates

The Song that Reminds Me of Growing Up

Peter, Paul & Mary *"Leaving on a Jet Plane"*, 1967



"My parents played a lot of Sixties and Seventies folky songwriter music, which probably totally influenced my aesthetic. I think it sort of set the bar at a certain place of realising that a great songwriter really makes work that transcends generations; makes work that everyone can listen to. I remember driving to the snow, and the interminable amount of hours [it took] at a young age and practicing trying to whistle, and that song playing in the car."

The First Song I Learned to Play

Eddie Cochran *"Summertime Blues"*, 1958



"I had *Smash Hits* magazine and there was a contest to win a guitar, and in my delusional childhood state I was just convinced I was going to win it. I didn't, but it awakened a desire in me to play guitar. I think my impatience with getting technically good worked for me and against me, in the sense that as soon as I learned three chords I was ready to play songs and write songs, and I had an assumption that I should be able to. But on the downside I never got technically as good as I should have. So songs like this, they were very validating immediately."

The Song That Makes Me Cry

Kronos Quartet *"The Beatitudes"*, 2012



"I remember at 18 years old having a conversation with someone and saying I didn't listen to any instrumental music. I was completely lyrically obsessed, which I think was not uncommon for articulate teenagers who are into poetry and romanticism and stuff. But as I've gotten older, I've started listening almost exclusively to instrumental music; it's like I got exhausted by lyrics. This particular song, a friend put it on a mix, and I love music that is sort of heartbreaking in the sense of the divinity that it makes you aware of, the perfection of harmony. So there's a heartbreaking quality to it, but it almost makes you feel like you've just been born and that anything's possible. That piece of music is incredibly moving to me."

The Song I'm Most Proud Of

Ben Lee *"Giving Up On Miracles"*, 2015



"The concept of this song is a very complex idea philosophically. It began with a friend of mine who left me very inspired. We were talking about the idea that a lot of people say 'I'm waiting for guidance, I need a sign', and my friend said to me, 'I reject miracles, I give them back.' He said, 'I want an enlightenment that I've won on my own. I don't want to cut corners, I don't want to be scooped up by the universe and deposited somewhere that I haven't achieved through my own efforts.' And that's a very interesting idea, and it was an idea that I really didn't know I'd be able to capture in a pop song. But these ideas really interested me and I feel like I nailed them in the song to the extent that I said what I meant. And so I feel a sense of accomplishment about that."

The Song I Wish I Wrote

Loudon Wainwright III *"Daughter"*, 2007



"My friend just had a baby girl and he posted this song on Facebook, and I was weeping. For anyone who's got a daughter it nails it. It has these lines in it like, "There's my daughter in the water, everything she owns I bought her", but it also has these lines, "There's my daughter in the water, I lost every time I fought her", because you know the power a little girl has over her dad. It's this real feeling of, you're so proud of your little girl. So I've been playing that song a little bit lately."

The Song I Want Played at My Funeral

Beethoven *"Ninth Symphony"*, 1824



"This piece played a very interesting role in world affairs. When the Berlin Wall came down, it was the first song that was played. In Chile when the rebels were being tortured by Pinochet's troops, their wives would stand outside the prison and play a recording of this music to give them hope. It's so full of hope for humanity; the human spirit is indomitable, the ability to keep on fighting. It's incredibly inspiring, and that music sums up everything about the pain and the joy of the human experience."

The Song People Wouldn't Expect Me To Like

Pet Shop Boys *"Left To My Own Devices"*, 1988



"They're not necessarily a band I keep coming back to as an adult, but when I think of the Pet Shop Boys, they took very unusual emotions and put them in a way that was accessible to the radio. They gave a sense that it was possible to make complex statements in pop music, and one of the things you contend with as a pop songwriter is that you're writing in a medium which people underestimate in general. And if you can smuggle in some meaningful or subversive elements, you're kind of going against the stream."

The Song I Play Air Guitar To

The Silver Lake Chorus *"Overboard"*, 2015



"They're a 26-piece choir from LA, and I wrote a song for them called 'Overboard'. They made it more heroic than I ever could have. The chorus is "baby life is short, so let's go overboard". Twenty-six people singing that in harmony with this amazing atmosphere and these electric guitars . . . I jump around the house to it!"



“Pet Shop Boys took very unusual emotions and put them in a way that was accessible to the radio.”

BREAKING

The Magic Words of Speedy Ortiz

New England indie-rock act wins fans with tricky lyrics and trippy arrangements



NEED FOR SPEED
Dupuis, second right

"You make me wanna leave the one I'm with/Start a new relationship…." Speedy Ortiz's Sadie Dupuis is unexpectedly covering Usher during her band's soundcheck at Black Cat in Washington, D.C., and it's sounding pretty great. "Want me to keep going?" she asks as the sound guy watches, amazed. "I could go forever."

Dupuis, 26, likes surprising people. "Expectations have historically been low for female musicians, so I want to be really technically good onstage," says the singer-songwriter-guitarist after soundcheck. "So I always write parts that are a stretch for me. Someone tweeted that I looked bored onstage. I'm like, 'I'm just focusing so I don't fuck up this guitar part!'"

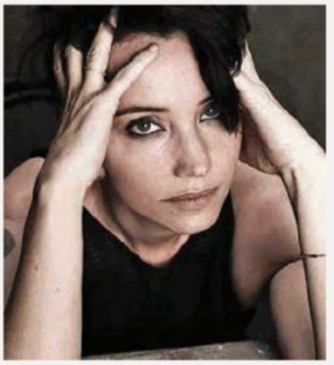
That refusal to ever settle for anything easy has made Speedy Ortiz – Dupuis, plus guitarist Devin McKnight, bassist Darl Ferm and drummer Mike Falcone – one of the most exciting bands in indie rock. Their second album, *Foil Deer,* is full of sneaky hooks and sharp turns, with densely tangled lyrics to match. Who else could make a line like "I am not averse to getting salt in my face/Let me marinate a week and reevaluate" as catchy as Dupuis does on the new album's "Swell Content"? "The jagged music they make gives her room to sing these jagged, original words," says ex-Pavement frontman Stephen Malkmus, who brought Speedy Ortiz on tour last year. "That makes them special."

"I always write parts that are a stretch for me," says Dupuis.

Dupuis studied math at MIT before dropping out to write, eventually earning a graduate degree in poetry from University of Massachusetts-Amherst. She penned most of the new album last year after leaving a teaching post at UMass. "I was trying to write three songs a day – 'How cool is it that this is my job now?'" she says.

This U.S. summer, Speedy Ortiz are playing their biggest shows yet, including choice festival bookings and a few dates in Oregon opening for Wilco's 20th-anniversary tour. "We're having the best time," Dupuis says. "And we're playing an amphitheater in August. That's going to be weird as hell."

SIMON VOZICK-LEVINSON



HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS
Suze DeMarchi's new solo album is her first since 1999's *Telelove*.

SUZE DEMARCHI FINDS HER 'HOME'

Baby Animals singer's second solo LP comes 16 years after her first

A few years ago, Suze DeMarchi had an idea – to record an album centred around the theme of home. After a lengthy stint spent living in the U.S., her return to Australia in 2009 reinforced its importance and so, more than 15 years on from her debut solo album, 1999's *Telelove*, she set about putting her stamp on a series of cover songs focusing on the concept.

"When I started looking at the options, there were so many beautiful songs, it was a no-brainer," she says. The majority of the album, called *Home*, and produced by Shane Nicholson, was cut in a little over a week at The Grove Studios on the Central Coast, and sees DeMarchi tackle songs by the likes of Sheryl Crow, the Clash, Ryan Adams and Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young with the help of guests such as Jimmy Barnes, Tex Perkins and Russell Morris, who duets with DeMarchi on CSNY's "Our House". "I got chills singing with Russell," says DeMarchi. "I'd done my vocal in Sydney and flew down to Melbourne and got into the studio with Russell and he started singing and I was like, 'Wow'. I ended up re-doing my vocals because after he sung, I was so inspired."

ROD YATES



BANG YOUR HEAD Megadeth feature in *The Decline of Western Civilization Part II: The Metal Years*

ARCHIVES

Cult Documentary Trilogy Gets Reissue

'The Decline of Western Civilization' films are back in focus and on Blu-ray

Filmmaker Penelope Spheeris says she doesn't like to look back. That's why she set her daughter, Anna, the task of compiling the new Blu-ray boxset of her cult music trilogy, *The Decline of Western Civilization*. But when she saw the final results – all three documentaries plus an extra disc of unedited interviews and extras transferred by 2K scan – "I was astounded," she says. "The 2K looks gorgeous."



Spheeris

Spheeris, now 69, was just out of film school in 1979 when she wrangled funds from a would-be porno movie backer to make her documentary on the L.A. punk scene. "I felt I was capturing something unique to the history of rock & roll," she recalls. "Because I had been rockin' since right when rock & roll was born and I had never seen anything like punk rock. I knew it was something special."

Scenes of Black Flag in their jam space and Darby Crash of the Germs being obnoxious and playing with a spider in his kitchen several months before his death would become solid VHS staples for punk fans, just as Spheeris's follow-up film would for fans of Eighties glam metal.

In addition to appearances by a surprisingly coherent Ozzy Osbourne and shamelessly sleazy KISS duo Paul Stanley and Gene Simmons, *Decline II* includes a memorable scene where W.A.S.P guitarist Chris Holmes is drunk out of his mind in a swimming pool. Spheeris says filming it "was pure hell".

"I wasn't happy with it, I didn't think we really got it. In the editing room we tried to throw it together because I knew I would never get Chris back again; turns out to be the scene that everybody loves the most."

Watching an emotionally distraught Holmes pouring liquid into his mouth from a vodka bottle has shocked rock fans for over 25 years, but Spheeris reveals that among the extras included in the new boxset is uncut footage that shows him filling up one of the bottles with pool water.

And while she admits that scene is still pretty disturbing, it's nothing compared to what she encountered while making *The Decline of Western Civilization III*. "I thought *Decline III* was going to be about music but it wound up being more about homeless kids," she says. "Talk about heavy."

That third film has only had a limited release up until now, which is one of the reasons Spheeris is happy about the release of the boxset. But she still gets terrified of looking back. "It's like having your life flash in front of you," she says.

MATT REEKIE

SIDE PROJECT

TUKA'S SOLO EXPERIMENT

Thundamentals MC drops genre-defying third set

Two days after Thundamentals wrapped production on 2014's *So We Can Remember*, emcee Tuka started work on the project that would become his third solo LP, *Life Death Time Eternal*. The quick turnaround wasn't planned, but the momentum of his previous solo joint and then a Thundas record that pushed a mellower sound to the forefront empowered him to create more experimental music. "I've left all of my inhibitions behind," says Tuka. "I'm always going to be a hip-hop head but this was an excuse to not pay attention to genre. Doing this solo stuff really lets me stretch that."

The emcee traded the hip-hop process of writing lyrics over a beat for an approach that saw him focus on raw ideas and songwriting while creating melodies and hooks entirely in his head. Later, tracks were laid down over the barest of drum patterns before being co-produced by Tuka and a crew of collaborators, including Countbounce. "I definitely love bands like London Grammar and that new wave of atmospheric indie rock," offers the emcee, "and with that in mind I went to Bounce, who's a bit more experimental, to reshape some of my hip-hop songs into something different."

Tuka's hip-hop roots, though, are far from forgotten. Not only are they woven throughout *Life Death Time Eternal*, but the emcee has started penning songs for the Thundas' next joint. The trio are fully supportive of each other's personal ambitions. "We're a unit," says Tuka, "and we're all really accommodating of each other's lives because before we were musicians we were friends." DAN FINDLAY



STEPPING OUT Thundamentals emcee Tuka releases his third solo LP

FROM TOP: COURTESY; MIKE WINDLE/FILMMAGIC; COURTESY


BRANDY



Hunters & Collectors Get Nicked, 1981

Photographed by Greg Noakes

"Photo briefs from artist managers are not always that helpful in deciding upon a look or a location, so I always ask the band what they're looking to achieve," explains snapper Greg Noakes. "Interestingly, Hunters & Collectors were quite happy to be photographed from behind, with their backs to the camera, while simply being part of a very urban Melbourne landscape. This concept found us all trudging through city streets on the lookout for that iconic location in which to shoot. As we made our way through the city square we came across a bunch of cubs in uniform and tried incorporating them into a picture with only limited success.

And then, looming in the distance we saw the notorious Young & Jackson pub in Swanston Street, where a young paper boy was flogging newspapers out front, wearing an AC/DC T-shirt. Gathering around, the band decided to help him while I positioned myself for the shot. I guess the sight of an apparent gang surrounding the paper boy and reading his newspapers was enough to enlist the interest of a young constable nearby who came to investigate . . . and I had my shot!"

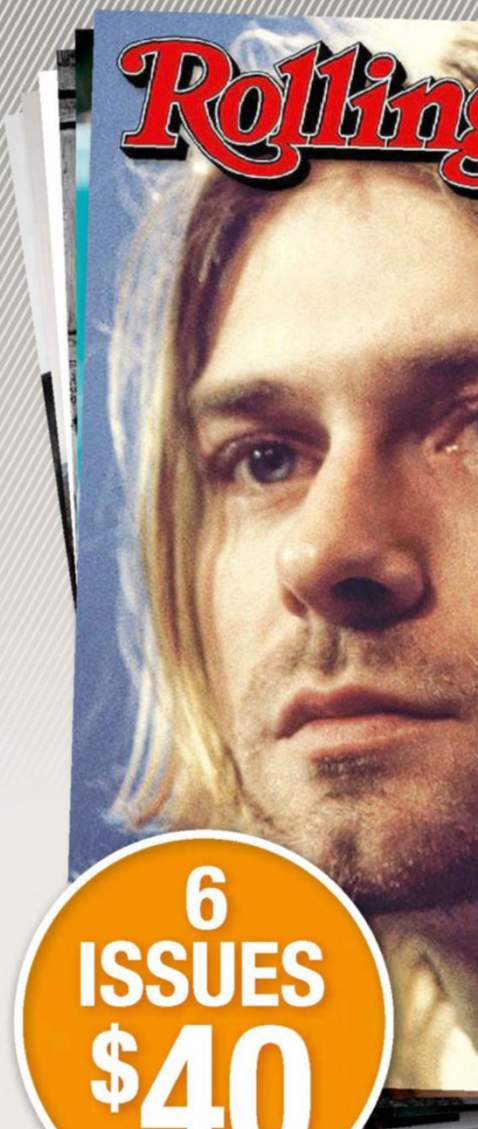
Adds Hunters & Collectors frontman Mark Seymour: "Of all the band shots we did in that era, this was the best one, I reckon."

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THE FUTURE IS NOW

We profile 10 of the hottest artists who are climbing the charts, breaking the Internet or just dominating our office stereos . . .



EVES THE BEHAVIOR

SOUNDS LIKE: Moody, lush electro-pop
FOR FANS OF: Lorde, Chvrches, East India Youth
WHY YOU SHOULD PAY ATTENTION: Twenty-year-old Hannah Karydas, aka Eves the Behavior, has come a long way since performing at "Cairns Has Got Talent" when she was 11. She recently signed a deal with ATC Management, which counts Nick Cave as a client, and spent time in America and the UK working with songwriters such as Chris Walla (Death Cab For Cutie) and Dave Sitek (TV On the Radio). Appearances at Laneway and this month's Splendour, alongside supports with the likes of George Ezra and Jarryd James, have helped build on the buzz created by singles "TV" and "Electrical", both of which feature on Karydas' debut EP, out this month. "I'm really focusing on creating a fictional world with recurring characters, and a story that unfolds every time I put something out," says Karydas, who experiences synesthesia, meaning she associates music with colours.
SHE SAYS: "I'm a very visual person. Songs exist in rooms for me and they have certain defined faces with certain temperatures. To me music and visuals go hand in hand."
HEAR FOR YOURSELF: "TV" – a beautifully sombre meditation on seeing "characters on screen act out exaggerated forms of how I felt".

ROD YATES



BULLY

SOUNDS LIKE: Trying to squeeze a drop of blood from a sugarcube

FOR FANS OF: Pixies, Best Coast, Weezer's *Pinkerton*

WHY YOU SHOULD PAY ATTENTION: During her internship at Electrical Audio studio, Bully lead singer Alicia Bognanno seriously impressed the oft-acerbic producer Steve Albini (Nirvana, Pixies, PJ Harvey). "She was a fucking joy," he told *NME*. Her analog recording homework paid off when it came to assembling the Nashville quartet's full-length StarTime/Columbia debut, *Feels Like*, a knuckle sandwich of pop-punk hooks and grunge heft. Through broken arms, poisonous memories and other lyrical baggage, Bognanno balances vocal clarity and a throat-ripping rasp. Equally potent is the tight, occasionally sludgy, frequently anthemic work of guitarist Clayton Parker and drummer Stewart Copeland – both vets of Saddle Creek garage rockers Pujol – alongside bassist Reece Lazarus. Recently on the road with Jeff the Brotherhood, Bully shift to supporting Best Coast later this year.

THEY SAY: "I think I did 'I Remember' in three takes," says Bognanno. "I just nailed it out. A lot of that stuff is just emotional, and it's not hard for me to replicate what I originally did live. It feels really good for me to scream about things like that. It's like a stress reliever. There's certain nights where I just really have an off day and we'll play a show. It happened the other night and it was like, 'Oh my gosh, it's so good to get up here and scream it out.'

"I would love to meet Paul Westerberg from the Replacements," she adds. "I really like the way he writes his lyrics. Just the little things that he says. 'Skyway' or 'Achin' to Be', they're so sweet. If I could write a word as good as he's written a whole song, I would be pleased. The music is awesome too, of course."

HEAR FOR YOURSELF: Bully's new single "Trying" flips between honey-coated verses and an acid-streaked chorus. **REED FISCHER**



KNXWLEDGE

SOUNDS LIKE: Laidback hip-hop soul, sans ego
FOR FANS OF: Kendrick Lamar, Joey Bada$$, D'Angelo
WHY YOU SHOULD PAY ATTENTION: New Jersey-born and Los Angeles-based beatmaker Knxwledge found the best possible breakthrough thanks to Kendrick Lamar, who stumbled upon the producer's Bandcamp. Knxwledge subsequently got a coveted credit on Lamar's recent release, *To Pimp a Butterfly*, having created the dreamy, atmospheric beat for "Momma". In May he released an album via Stones Throw titled *Hud Dreems*, and he's prepping a collaborative record with Anderson Paak (their duo is called NxWorries). Plus, after spending some time with them in the studio, Knxwledge should be able to add credits for Action Bronson, Prodigy and Schoolboy Q to his list.
HE SAYS: "Probably what sets my tunes apart is the feeling. Everything I touch is 800 per cent melody driven, so whether it's some chops or chords, it's going to be church soul minus the hallelujahs."
HEAR FOR YOURSELF: Knxwledge supplied the jazzy beat for "Killuminati" by Joey Bada$$. BRITTANY SPANOS

FRASER A. GORMAN

SOUNDS LIKE: Imaginative, richly embellished country-rock
FOR FANS OF: Courtney Barnett, Justin Townes Earle, Bob Dylan
WHY YOU SHOULD PAY ATTENTION: Signed to Courtney Barnett's Milk! Records label, the 23-year-old songwriter toured the UK twice recently: once supporting Barnett and again on his own. Fleshed out by members of You Am I, King Gizzard, Harmony and Eagle & the Worm, his all-star debut album, *Slow Gum*, rolls along with witty, rambling warmth. "We're All Alright" blooms with horns and backup singers, while "My Old Man" indulges in pub-friendly fiddle and piano and the closing "Blossom & Snow" evokes what Gorman calls the "super dry finger-picking" of Townes Van Zandt. It's old-school Americana reimagined by a young Aussie larrikin, right down to off-centre lyrics about a boy who "nearly killed himself sippin' life from a lead-paint-filled balloon".

"There's enough boring and beige singer-songwriter shit around already," says Gorman.

HE SAYS: A carpenter by trade, Gorman grew up in Victorian beach town Torquay before heading to Melbourne. But as his peers dove into 1960s garage and psych with their bands, a teenage Gorman turned to Dylan, Neil Young and other solo talents. "Songwriters became a thing for me," he confesses, nursing a stutter that comes and goes. But he's no unfunny troubadour: "There's enough boring and beige singer-songwriter shit around already. I'm not a super serious guy. I like to have lots of fun and party and joke. I can't help but let some of that come out in my music."



HEAR FOR YOURSELF: Watch the *Anchorman*-style video for "Shiny Gun", and catch Gorman launching *Slow Gum* throughout July. DOUG WALLEN

ALGIERS

SOUNDS LIKE: The Death Grips of gospel torching the South's dark underbelly
FOR FANS OF: TV On the Radio, Nick Cave, Kanye West
WHY YOU SHOULD PAY ATTENTION: Tucked inside D'Angelo's 2000 masterpiece *Voodoo* was rapper-poet Saul Williams' furious liner notes taking aim at the state of black music. ("Most of my peers seem to idolize Donald Trump more than Sly Stone," Williams wrote.) A Georgia State University student named Franklin James Fisher pasted those words on his wall and never forgot them. In the mid-aughts, Fisher linked up with ex-classmates with post-punk leanings, Lee Tesche and Ryan Mahan, and pieced together Algiers based upon the parallel energies of punk and gospel traditions. "Both types of music come from dispossessed populations and marginalised populations," Fisher says. "We decided to follow that down as far as we possibly could." In 2012 and 2013, they released "Blood" and "Claudette", biting singles that combine Blind Boys of Alabama-style vocals and harmonies, and beastly, bent-metal beats. At that point, Matador Records had heard enough to be enthralled, and booked Algiers to record at 4AD Studios with Tom Morris (Bloc Party, Lydia Lunch) in London. Drinking "sort of like a hot toddy", Fisher punched in his vocals late at night with the lights down low. The results are spiritual, political and confrontational.

"In popular music, things are way too packaged, way too smooth."

THEY SAY: "I still don't consider myself a singer," says Fisher. "I appreciate the aesthetic of just really not caring – not trying to sound pretty. Especially if you're angry, just shout it out. Any sort of traditional negro spiritual music, gospel music, soul or R&B, the best versions were when they were just raw and emotional and not overly produced. In every genre across the board in popular music, things are way too packaged, way too smooth. It's not even human anymore. Everything on the radio is Auto-Tuned. The edges are all trimmed. We want things to be rough around the edges. That's something to embrace . . . Bob Dylan made it OK not to have a traditionally nice voice. In the black community, the standard is really high as to who can be called a singer. That's why I'm so hesitant to call myself a singer. My sisters are both amazing singers. I just kinda scream and do my thing."
HEAR FOR YOURSELF: Algiers build a terrordome where Fisher can shred his larynx on "But She Was Not Flying". REED FISCHER



BORN LION

SOUNDS LIKE: Music to sweat, dance and get a speeding ticket to

FOR FANS OF: The Bronx, Fugazi, The Hot Snakes

WHY YOU SHOULD PAY ATTENTION: Having spent years plugging away in various bands on the Sydney circuit without much success or acclaim, when Born Lion's single, "D For Danger", was added to full rotation on Triple J in 2013, its members didn't quite know how to react. "I was in complete disbelief and shock," laughs singer/guitarist John Bowker. "I didn't think that would happen at all. After a lot of hard work and hours and hours of playing guitar in your bedroom you go, yeah, that's really good that there's some recognition happening for all the shit you've done." Since forming in 2012, Born Lion's mix of coruscating riffs, punk rock energy and blistering rock & roll has attracted more than just interest from Triple J. There have been national tours and supports with the Hives and Karnivool, as well as an opening spot on the main stage at Soundwave in 2013. It's all culminated in the release of their debut album, *Final Words*, this month.

"Let's have fun and make the biggest impact possible."

THEY SAY: "The guitarist [Red] and I were in a band before this called the Watt Riot, and we got to a point where we made a really conscious decision to go, 'Let's just do something different and not be super serious about what we're doing, just not be so concerned about what people are going to think'," says Bowker. "We went, 'Stuff it, let's have fun and make the biggest impact possible.'"

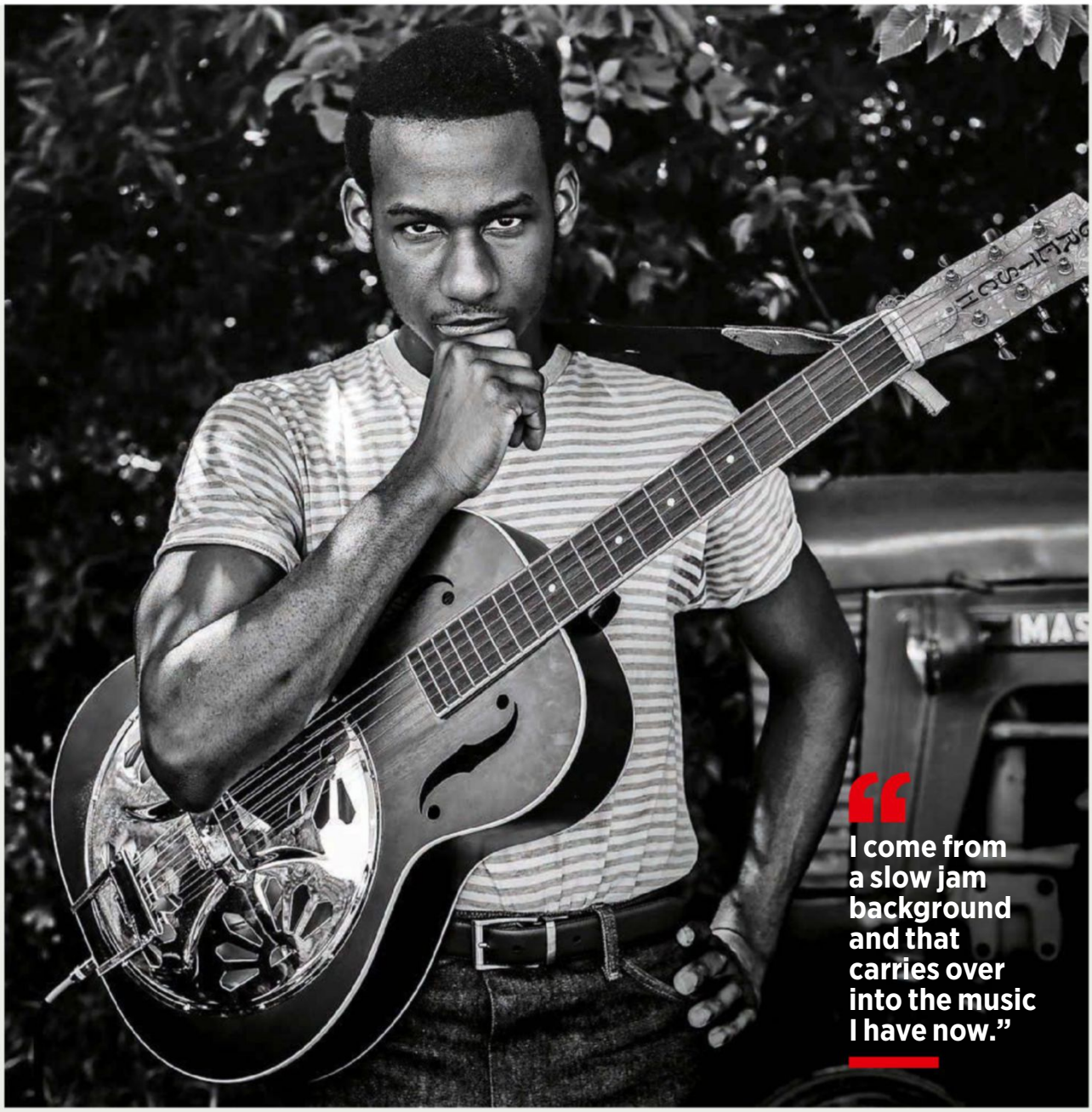
HEAR FOR YOURSELF: "Break the Curse", the unflinching opening track on *Final Words*. Gang vocals, discordant guitars and a stuttering beat coalesce into a sound that's utterly addictive. ROD YATES





THE WEATHER STATION

SOUNDS LIKE: Tradition-spanning contemplative folk that captures rare beauty in both lyrics and melodies
FOR FANS OF: Joni Mitchell, the Tallest Man on Earth, Sufjan Stevens
WHY YOU SHOULD PAY ATTENTION: On her third album, *Loyalty*, Toronto-based songwriter Tamara Lindeman’s poetic reflections are set to minimalist combos of acoustic guitar, keys and just enough percussion to add bite to her words. For the album, she worked closely with Feist engineer Robbie Lackritz and Afie Jurvanen (a.k.a. Bahamas). “Lately, I’ve outsourced my boundaries to other people,” she says. “I require someone or something to tell me when to stop.” In the case of *Loyalty*, she found out with two months to spare that she was going to record at La Frette Studios in France. When she arrived, she was still rewriting, and had to sing scratch vocals on a few tracks. “There were still one or two words, or like one line that I was going to change,” she recalls. “Everyone just loved the scratch vocal. My two collaborators were like, ‘You’re not allowed to sing it again.’” In turn, her low, rich voice brings out the textures of dry grass, the cityscape, and relentless rain in intimate fashion.
SHE SAYS: “I listen really closely to words. I love country music and I love a lot of pop music. Different singers require different material. I can appreciate the simplest song, or the simplest sentiment. If Otis Redding sings it, it’s amazing. I’m always just curious. It’s often very obvious in a song, you can tell if someone believes in what they’re singing. Generally when I don’t like music, it’s when I hear it and I can tell the person doesn’t believe what they’re saying. It can be anything, as long as you’re committed . . . My style of songwriting is I tend to play guitar and daydream and sorta sing stuff. I tend to record it to remember. In that phase, I tend to sing all the same stuff anyone else sings. I sing about rain and the moon. My tendency over time is to refine that into something that feels really meaningful and I can hang onto it for a long time.”
HEAR FOR YOURSELF: Lindeman’s pin-point attention to detail turns a late-night phone call into a gorgeous, lonely meditation on “Loyalty”.



LEON BRIDGES

SOUNDS LIKE: Usher as a vintage soul crooner in 1963, backed by Motown's Funk Brothers

FOR FANS OF: Sam Cooke, Aloe Blacc circa "I Need a Dollar", John Legend

WHY YOU SHOULD PAY ATTENTION: Leon Bridges' elegantly smouldering voice often evokes comparisons to Sam Cooke. However, his tone is unmistakably modern, a result of listening to 112 and Dru Hill as a teenager growing up in Fort Worth, Texas, before discovering Cooke and the Temptations. "I come from a slow jam background, and that carries over into the music I have now," he says. Four years ago, he started performing at open mic nights, accompanying himself on guitar, and met Austin Jenkins of White Denim. "His vision was, 'I want to make it exactly like it came out in the Fifties and Sixties'," remembers Bridges. Together with White Denim's Josh Block, they recorded "Coming Home" and "Better Man", and premiered the songs on music blog Gorilla vs. Bear last October. A bidding war ensued, with Bridges signing to Columbia, and he subsequently earned raves at this year's SXSW for songs like "Lisa Sawyer", where he details his mother's childhood in New Orleans.

HE SAYS: Born Todd Bridges, he originally performed under the name Lost Child. "My mum, she used to always tell me whenever I had a haircut or something, 'Boy, you look like a lost child'," he says. "Later, I wanted a more professional-sounding name. A lot of people in college would call me Leon, after the actor. He acted in *Cool Runnings*, *The Five Heartbeats* and *The Temptations*. People were saying I looked like him. I felt that 'Leon' and 'Bridges' went together very well."

HEAR FOR YOURSELF: On "Better Man", Bridges and his band strum soulfully on a black and white stage straight out of U.S. variety show *Shindig!*. MOSI REEVES



SUPERHEAVEN

SOUNDS LIKE: A smoky, slow-mo mosh pit in a high school gym

FOR FANS OF: Nirvana, Failure, Title Fight, melancholy and infinite sadness

WHY YOU SHOULD PAY ATTENTION: The second album from the Pennsylvanian band once known as Daylight, *Ours Is Chrome*, debuted at Number One on the Billboard Alternative New Artist chart and Number Two on the general New Artist chart. Call it a breakthrough; just don't call it grunge, as many critics have branded Superheaven's superfuzzy bummer rock. "People comment on the fact that we wear flannel kind of often, but shit, man, so does the rest of the world!" gripes singer-guitarist Taylor Madison. He adds, "I think it's cool to draw influence from something you really like and put your own spin on it – that's what we try to do." Superheaven succeed by mixing shimmery shoegaze and emo-smeared post-hardcore into their grungy big riffs.

THEY SAY: Madison taps into many dark real-life experiences with his lyrics, from the time his family were evicted from their home ("Room"), to the motorcycle accident that paralysed his younger brother ("From the Chest Down"), to the struggles surrounding his sister's heroin addiction ("Gushin' Blood"). "My family is aware of what a lot of the songs are about," he says. "They like some of it, because they think it's cool that I care enough about them to write about them. But I don't think my mum knows the one song is about us being evicted. And I think if she knew, she'd be embarrassed and probably not be that happy about it. But I write about my life, and that was a very big part of it, unfortunately."

"I don't think my mum knows the song is about us being evicted. She'd not be happy."

HEAR FOR YOURSELF: Guitars squeal and soar on "I've Been Bored" as Madison, in his gravelly, slackerish voice, shares a worthy sentiment: "I've been so sick of flowers on everything."

BRANDON GEIST

SAFIA

SOUNDS LIKE: If James Vincent McMorrow started writing bangers

FOR FANS OF: The Kite String Tangle, Chet Faker and the rest of Australian dance music's most soulful men

WHY YOU SHOULD PAY ATTENTION: To borrow a phrase from *Girls* protagonist Hannah Horvath, lead singer Ben Woolner-Kirkham might be the voice of his generation. Already, the former choirboy has been called up by Peking Duk and Alison Wonderland for guest spots, and Woolner's fending off more requests for his heavenly pipes by the day. Then there's the just-wrapped European tour, Triple J rotation, SXSW hype and plans for a debut album – if you're looking for SAFIA at Splendour this year, just follow the crowds.

THEY SAY: "It's really important to us to have the live element," Woolner says, despite the Canberra trio – also featuring drummer Michael Bell and Harry Sayers (guitars/keys) – often being pegged as beatmakers. "We don't feel we have to be seen as a certain genre. We can release a dance song, but then the next one could be a piano ballad with a guitar. Definitely there's electronic influences in there, but there's also those influences from bands and songwriters. It's not about sitting in a particular 'scene'."



HEAR FOR YOURSELF: "Listen to Soul, Listen to Blues", the breakthrough hit that started it all.

KATIE CUNNINGHAM

Kevin Parker's dream world

Tame Impala's visionary has a head full of ideas and not enough time to do everything

By MATT COYTE





ON TOP OF THINGS
Kevin Parker relaxes on the roof of his home between takes.

KEVIN PARKER ANSWERS THE DOOR AND USHERS us in off the busy main road that fronts his Fremantle home. It's the sort of house you'd imagine Tame Impala's frontman living in. An old, charming, single storey abode surrounded by modern warehouses and factories, it looks as out-of-place as you'd expect of a man whose music sounds like it's from another age. A lounge room is littered with throw cushions, Supertramp LPs and empty bottles. To the left, with only a thin sheet of glass separating the bedroom from the footpath, is the room where Parker recorded and mixed Tame Impala's third record, *Currents*, entirely on his own. His set-up is minimal, the sort of gear that any bedroom hobbyist might have. A ramshackle drum kit, a guitar covered in duct tape and some battered vintage synths only help compound the disparity between the sprawling sonic opus that is *Currents* and the humble circumstances in which it was created.

Parker has always worked like this, even on Tame Impala's 2010 debut, *Innerspeaker*. ("The idea of going to some flash studio where there's some stranger telling you how to arrange your song is pretty absurd to us," he said at the time.) *Currents* is a major departure from that guitar and delay-drenched debut and its 2012 follow-up, *Lonerism*, both musically – first single "'Cause I'm a Man" eschews his trademark guitar riffs for dreamy electro and R&B beats – and lyrically. For the first time ever Parker's vocals feature prominently in the mix, and the personal, first-person lyrics are sometimes brutally honest: "'Cause I'm a man, woman, I'll never be as strong as you," he sings in the single.

From the beginning, Tame Impala have kept people guessing. Initially signed to taste-making label Modular as a band made up of Parker, drummer Jay Watson and bassist Dominic Simper – the live line-up saw Simper switch to guitar and Nick Allbrook come in on bass (he's since been replaced by Cam Avery); Watson, meanwhile, is now on keys, with Julien Barbagallo on drums – it was unclear at first that the band was purely a vehicle for Parker's songwriting and solo recording. Until *Lonerism* cemented the idea that Tame Impala were only a band in the live sense, they were referred to mostly as a collective, something that seems to neither please nor irk Parker.

As he shows off some of his rare synths, a dozen bikers roar past at deafening volume and he chuckles. "There's a bikie hangout near here. I dunno exactly where it is, but everyone else does." A passerby coughs outside the window as they pass and they sound like they're in the room with us. Parker's neighbours have no doubt been listening to *Currents* taking shape for months. The next bedroom is filled with dozens of automated stage lights on stands. Parker explains that rather than complain about lighting design he wasn't happy with, he decided to take the lights home and teach himself how to design his own light show. It's D.I.Y. on a new level.

We make our way into the backyard. Evidence that Parker has been living, working and partying here for a considerable amount of time is littered everywhere. Beyond a wooden bench crammed with overflowing ashtrays and empties, sits a rowboat full of bottles and cans. A ladder leans precariously against a wall that has been half-painted lurid pink, but not very well.

As we settle in for a chat Parker's girlfriend, Sophie, wrestles with a paint gun – she grins sheepishly and waves a bottle of vodka at us. "This is the best way to clean the nozzle," she says as she pours the booze over the mechanism. It's pure student logic, and with Parker due to jet off to the States the next morning, it's safer not to think about what will happen to the half-pink wall in his absence. The boat, it seems, was here when Parker moved in. "I asked the real estate agent, 'Does the boat come with the house?' and she just looked at me and said, 'It's not part of the house, it's a boat.' I said, 'If they can't be fucked moving it, tell them I'll have it.' I think it gives it a nice flavour. It gives it movement. It makes it feel like the whole backyard is a lake."

"'Cause I'm a Man" was well-received, which must be a relief, because even though it was seen as a departure, it's very indicative of the rest of 'Currents'.

I maintain that I wouldn't put out a piece of music that I made as Tame Impala if it wasn't soulful and honest. But "'Cause I'm a Man" has definitely got a different flavour to what I consider to be Tame Impala. But I guess if people are into that then they'll be ready for the whole album.

Was it hard to write from a more personal angle?

Every album I do becomes more and more personal. I become more and more confident in myself as an artist to bear my soul. I definitely consider this album to be the best lyrically, which is why I made an effort not to bury the message of the songs in delay and reverb. It's something I made myself do, even though towards the very end I started getting that same old self-consciousness around my lyrics.

Is it true that you listen to a lot of hip-hop and R&B?

I do, just by coincidence these days. My girlfriend listens to a lot of R&B and hip-hop. I've always been into it but now I almost see it as a kind of nostalgic thing. The whole Nineties R&B thing, it's funny how it cropped up to me recently as something that brought back a lot of teenage memories. People talk about Sixties music as being nostalgic or Seventies music, but really that's a perceived nostalgia, like a Hollywood nostalgia, because for me this was the music that I heard when I was actually starting to switch onto music, even if it was something that I disliked at the time because I considered myself a grunge head. Even if I pretended to hate it when I was a teenager, it doesn't matter what it is or how good it is, or how much you like it, everything with age becomes romantic.

"We got signed as a band, and even the record company thought we were a band. It was confusing."

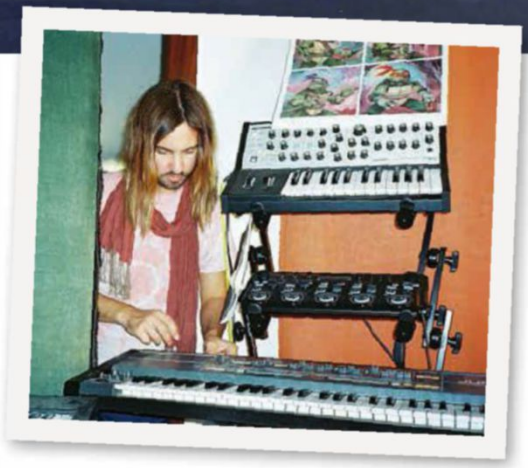
You mentioned that your girlfriend likes R&B. Do you think subconsciously you were making this record for her?

Don't bring up that topic! [*Parker looks around quickly to see if Sophie has been listening, before composing himself.*] I've always made music for myself and the people around me. That's why I started doing it. I started making music for myself, but then I started having friends who were into music and I started to make it for them to

Publisher MATT COYTE *wrote the QOTSA cover story in RS 747.*



PLAYING BALL
From left: Simper, Avery, Parker, Barbagallo and Watson play the New York Governors Ball, June 2015. Inset: Parker at work in his home studio



listen to. I first asked myself, "What would I like to hear?" But the secondary thought is, "What would the people that I love like to listen to? What would appeal to them?" Because if I didn't ask that question, I'd only be catering to the same one person.

You really seem to like recording on your own – living inside your own head. Does that mean you hate playing to an audience?

No, not at all. They both have their charms, especially when you've spent so long doing one of them – by the time you've exhausted one outlet you're craving the next. By the time you've spent two years going over the same thing perfecting a small section of music, you crave the opportunity to play it the whole way through. And the way you do it live is the way it is in that moment and it can't be changed and it's just for this audience and that's the end of it. Which is, when you think about it, completely the opposite to recording an album. So you have to treat it as a different thing.

How do you draw that line?

I used to be confused where the line was between the two. I'd make my studio recordings and then we'd play them live, but I didn't know if I was meant to make it exactly the same or to just completely abandon how it was in the recorded sense. So it was like that for years, me and Jay [Watson] had some serious arguments over it. I remember getting on stage at Falls Festival. It was the first time we ever played Falls and it was the biggest audience we'd ever played to, and we were getting on stage and sound checking. We didn't have any crew and we didn't know what we were doing and we were having this heated argument in front of all the people. We were just about to start and he did a drum fill and I made some quip about him being Dave Grohl or something and he pulled the finger on me. We didn't really know what we were doing.

Do you still feel like that?

Not at all. It's amazingly settled now. In a live sense at least. It couldn't be more ego-less. At least in between us. We've always got our problems with "the system". Not that we're out to smash the system, I'd hate to come across like that. It's more that when you want to live the rock & roll dream and do it the way that has been done since the 1960s, then you just go along with it. Just coast along. But if you actually choose to poke your head up and see what's going on and see how much more work the crew do than you, it's eye opening.

Do you think that if you ever decided to write a Tame Impala album with the entire band, just jamming out songs, you'd be able to do that?

Absolutely. That side of me has never faded. It's like driving a car. That's the easy part. When you're one person working with a bunch of musicians, especially dudes that you love, it's one of the most rewarding things in the world. That's fucking magical. It's an unparalleled feeling. It just so happens that it's not at all what Tame Impala is about. And never has been about.

Was it hard to recruit the other Tame Impala guys, who were your friends, and tell them that they'd never have any input in the writing and recording?

It was tricky when we were confused ourselves about what it was. It was only confusing when we were signed as a band, but even that, from day-dot was kind of weird because the band wasn't on the recordings. I've been recording music since was 12, on my own and before I even knew how to play instruments. So we got signed as a band and even the record label thought we were a band. It was confusing for us, because we went from two years as a touring band to a signed artist. But once we worked out ourselves what was going on we realised that the live part of Tame Impala was for the sake of doing it rather than for the sake of ourselves.

Can you explain what you mean by "the sake of doing it"?

It's for the love of doing. For us as musicians making music together, Tame Impala was kind of a side thing and the other bands that we had, like Mink Mussel Creek, were us coming together as musicians. But even with that it was completely ego-less. Even in Tame Impala, there's been barely any arguments because creatively it's just me. Once I'm finished the song, I'm satisfied with it. So then it's just, let's make something that we can play on

FROM TOP: JEFF KRAVITZ/FILMMAGIC FOR GOVERNORS BALL MUSIC FESTIVAL; COURTESY

stage. And because its not that usual structure of a band where everybody wants their moment to shine – there's none of that. There never has been because it's not what Tame Impala is about.

Are there other people who you look up to that work like that?

The Flaming Lips have a similar way of working. Wayne [Coyne] is the chief visionary. It's similar but different. [Flaming Lips multi-instrumentalist] Steve Drozd is a musical genius but they have roles.

Are you a control freak?

I don't think so. When people get paid for something they allocate that amount of time according to what they're being paid and that's what it means to them. People are involved with lots of different bands, they split up their time and it becomes a time-allocation thing. The music and how well the music corresponds with what they're doing fades into the background. It takes so long to find people to work with who get what you're doing, that want to help your music and your vision.

What was the turning point for you? When did you get so comfortable steering the Tame Impala ship?

There must have been some crucial moment where we were meant to go on stage and some sound guy said, "Kevin, just shut up. Just let us do our job. We know what we're doing, you just be the musician. You do your little thing, you just get up on stage and play your guitar. Sing the lyrics and everyone claps and we just get on with it."

Don't guys like that hate that you're so hands-on with the production and everything?

I'm trying to change the fucking system and it's been in place for many years, and it's tiring, for people, for people like me to interrupt their job. It took a long time to gain the respect from people so they'd listen to me.

Do you find it hard to imagine not being involved with every aspect?

We were practicing in LA recently at this big-arse rehearsal complex, and a big artist was practicing next to us and we were like, "Oh my god, he's here!" We were there for four days, so excited because this artist was practicing next to us and we could hear his songs being played. And then on the last day we found out he wasn't even there. Apparently he rocked up at the end of the last day and was like, "Cool, sounds good", and then left. So that's kind of how it happens, they have a big production team, but for me, I need to know how it's working.

Would you take inspiration from anywhere or are there things you'd find too cheesy?

Everything is relevant. There are no hard and fast rules about what is cheesy and what is commercial because it's all based on a time and a place. It's all relative.

There's really no one else that sounds like Tame Impala. Was that important to you?

I would say that's the one thing that I rest on. The one thing that I make sure of before I let something out of the studio doors. I ask myself the question, "What you're doing here, could you get that anywhere else? Could you get exactly what this is somewhere else?" And if the answer is yes, then it's pointless. If this is the only way that they can get this particular blob of emotion and groove or musical sensibility, then it's worth existing. It's proven its own existence. So yeah, it's extremely important to me.



GOT GAME Parker mid-gaming session with help from a furry friend.

But nobody's even trying to copy your sound . . .

I also think that comes down to having a singular vision. I feel like this sounds like I'm downplaying the idea of collaboration, but collaborating has to do with compromise and blending. And for me it's cool, I love the idea of blending, but it also dilutes. You run the risk with collaborating that you can blend it all together and all of a sudden you've got brown.

The Perth scene seems very collaborative and supportive. Do you get an inkling of any kind of jealousy or ill feeling from any of the people you used to be really tight with?

No. I do remember that when we first got signed a lot of bands hated us. Modular was a cool label that only signed cool bands. We weren't a cool band, but suddenly we were on this cool label. There were definitely a lot of bands around us that considered themselves the cool band of Perth. I do remember that suddenly we were on the outside. But do you know what? One of the reasons Tame Impala was rejected was that we were never part of the Perth gigging scene. Mink Mussel Creek were to some degree, but we still played by our own rules. We played backyard parties more than we played bars and really we didn't play that many gigs as Tame Impala before we got signed.

Why did you avoid playing conventional gigs?

I didn't really feel the need to take new songs to the corner bar. It didn't seem like that would propel me to the next level as an artist. If my music was going to reach more people it was going to be about more than just how many times we could play in front of a pub full of people.

It seems like you've got a very modern, non-traditional-rock mentality, but then you've got Supertramp records all over your living room . . .

Yeah, but how many times do you think Supertramp played down at their local pub? Not many I imagine. Don't get me wrong though. I've loved every gig that I've played, especially with Mink Mussel Creek, because they're the band where we would play gigs and not even remember any of them because we were so fucking drunk and stoned. Playing gigs in those sort of bands was more about the night out for us. Instead of going to the club, in the afternoon we'd all rock up to the same house and start drinking and being stoked with each other's company, and then a whirlwind of shit would happen and somewhere in amongst that we'll have played a gig.

So it was an experience rather than a chore?

It's more about the experience of interacting with people and doing music. Playing music implies that it's a kind of sport where "doing music" is a lifestyle, which is

MATT SAV

what I was involved with and what really galvanised my love and respect for it.

Given that you speak so fondly about those times, do you feel lonely making Tame Impala records?

To me it's two completely different ways of making music. I didn't consider it to be loneliness at all. That word doesn't even come into my head. *Lonerism* is more about being around other people and feeling lonely amongst other people.

Speaking of which, as your profile grows, and you start rubbing shoulders with big names in the U.S., how does a Perth boy who makes records in his bedroom deal with people like Kanye West and his ilk?

If I was in a room with Kanye I'd probably be fanning out a bit. But I can play the role. I know how to switch it on. Which doesn't mean it feels natural, but I do believe in the ability to get lost in the moment. That is something that is so illusive. To be a part of a situation that you wouldn't usually think that you'd be a part of. To be able to forget your inhibition and accept what is around you. Feeding the part of yourself that's wanting to move forward, wanting to not analyse yourself all the time and just forget who you are, which is coincidentally what *Currents* is mainly about.

Does it worry you, forgetting who you are?

Not these days. It's more feeling this deep yearning for what there still is to experience. Things you feel like you wanted to do but you held yourself back because you felt like you should be this kind of person. Feeling like you've been too wrapped up in your own sense of identity as a person that is reclusive. At some point you just realise you've been stopping yourself from experiencing things. It takes more energy to inhibit yourself rather than just let it take you. It does have to do with sensing your own mortality. I will say that.

Are you worried about dying?

It's not about dying, it's just a sense that the first half of your life you don't consider what things will be like forever, you're just concerned about the now. At some point you realise that there are parts of you that have always wanted to flourish but that you've always kept in the wings. You realise that if you don't let them flourish now, the chances are that they never will. Things that you've fantasised about but you've shut them out. Your perceived sense of what you "should" be prevails. At some point you realise that that part of you is a lie, that part is contrived. The real part of you wants to experience, wants to try new things.

Is that why you take big risks, like replacing guitars with synths?

I do, but it's weird. On one hand it's a risk, but on the other it's a risk not to do what you want to do deep within you. I was aware that a lot of people were wanting this traditional psych rock type of thing, but I felt like if I made an album that was what was expected of me, even if it was what I wanted to do, that would be the sell-out. For me that would be the risk because I'd be doing something I don't want to do just because it was expected of me.

You seem to think deeply about your music. Do you enjoy talking about it?

Only because I feel like I should. I see things clearer when I have to talk about it, because thoughts have a tendency to get totally lost inside your own brain. People analysing my lyrics is something that I kind of hoped people would do from day-dot. I hoped people would read the lyrics and digest them and compare them to their own lives and take meaning and discuss them and really pull them apart.

You can really hear the lyrics on this album. You must be more proud of them...

"There's part of me that knows there's no turning back. There are people who want to hear this."

That's a learning experience, because I poured my heart and soul and spent arguably more time on lyrics on *Lonerism* than I did on the instrumental sections. But when it came to actually putting the vocals in the music . . . I was like a snail – touch my antennae and I'd recoil and hide. I still thought they were audible, but it wasn't until about a year later that I realised "Fuck, I can't hear the lyrics! C'mon man, turn the lyrics up, we wanna hear them!" So I thought I was bearing my words for all to hear when I mixed *Lonerism*. It wasn't until afterwards that I realised I was burying them. So I had to force myself. I knew I would regret it later if I didn't mix up the vocals on this album.

It must be hard without someone else in the studio to make the decision for you.

It's brutal. You have no idea. At the same time though, if the lyrics come from the heart and the soul and you've taken time and energy and you believe in them, then you should be proud of them and not be afraid to have them understood. For a singer-songwriter, that's what the song is, it's getting a message across. It's not about how much flanging you're putting on the drums. That's what's crucifying about a song where you played every instrument – you care about every single little element equally, like they're your own children.

What was your main plan-of-attack when you set out to make 'Currents'?

I guess I felt like I'd mastered psychedelic rock as what the general person perceives it to be, which is making a mind-bending sonic landscape, using the tools that anyone would use like reverb, phaser, and washed-out effects. I feel like I've done that. I could do that again, but for me, I wanted to try and use different tools to try and make you feel woozy when you listen to a song.

Woozy, that's a great term . . .

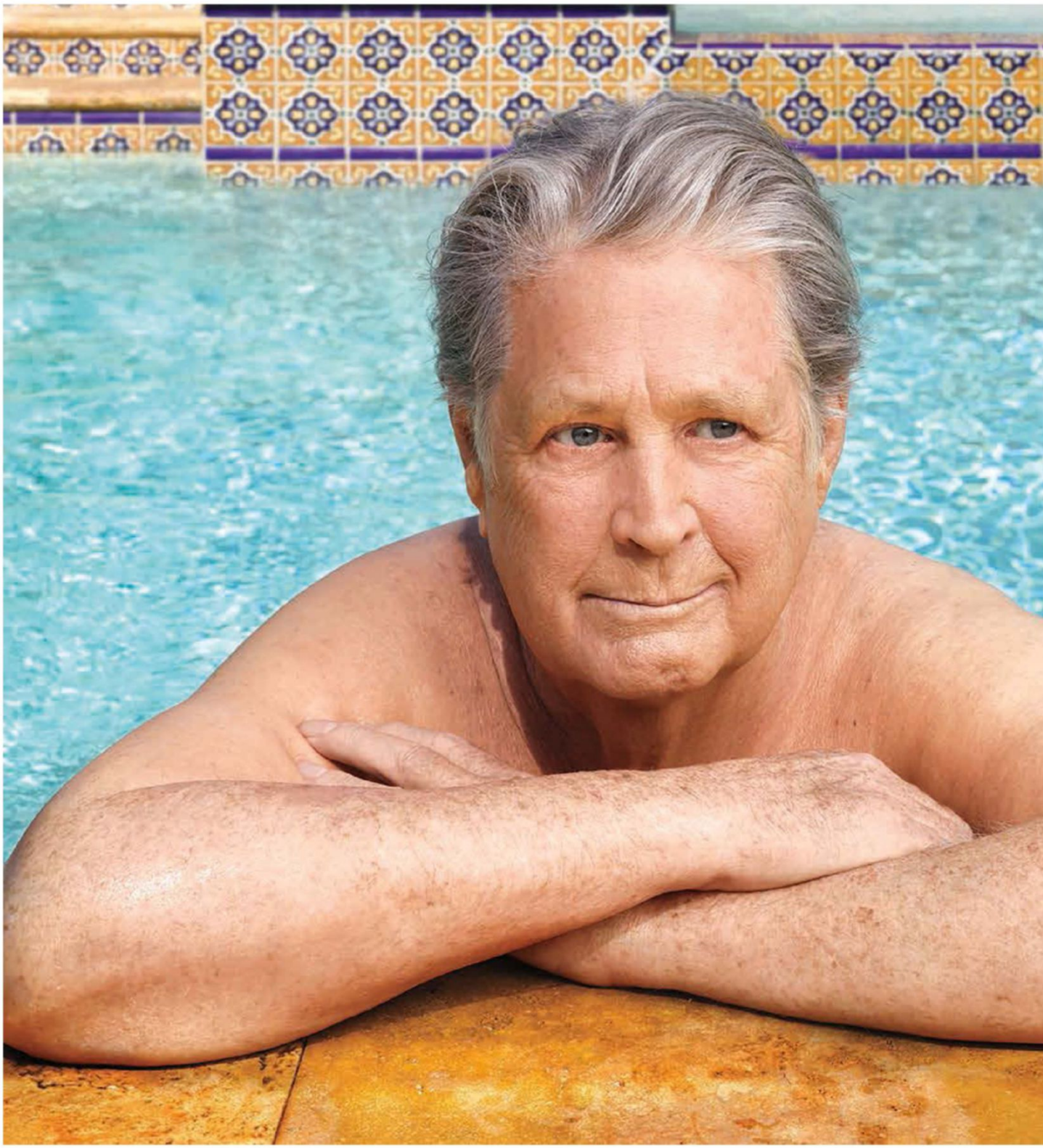
For me now, when I make music and I want to make people feel woozy it just seems all too easy to reach for the phaser button. I wouldn't have felt like I'd accomplished something if I'd just slapped all that on. I want to use other elements in sound that can make you feel different. In going down that path, because it's not something that I know all that well, I don't feel like I've made "Elephant 2.0". I know how that would be received, I know the radio stations would play it. I know exactly what would happen. But it wouldn't have that unknown quality that I love about music so much. And if I did something that challenged what I've done before it makes me feel human. It's the unknown, stumbling onto something new.

Even if it challenges the fans' allegiance to Tame Impala?

There's part of me that knows that there is no turning back. I know that there are people who are wanting to hear this. I know that there are fans. Some of them expect something, some of them will just appreciate that as long as it's me making a song that I'm honest about, they'll sense that honesty. But at the end of the day if I can convince some people that are entrenched in their views of genres, or they feel that the only way they can appreciate music is if it has certain qualities like guitars or distortion or real drums as opposed to drum machines – if I can convince any one of them that that stuff doesn't matter and that the core of the song is the important part, then I feel like I've accomplished something. If they can embrace other things that they would have disliked in other genres and if they see those qualities in a new light.

How ambitious are you really? What sort of mark do you want to leave?

Should I take the Kanye West approach to this? [*Laughs*] No, I think I probably won't be satisfied with my career as a musician or someone that has a unique perspective if I don't leave some sort of mark and open people's eyes to something outside of their comfort zone.



Brian Wilson



CATCH A WAVE
Wilson at his Beverly Hills home in May.

Cruising L.A., eating tacos and watching basketball with a pop genius at peace

By Jason Fine

Photograph by Mark Seliger

ALMOST ANY DAY IN L.A., you could find Brian Wilson pretty easily if you wanted to, sitting in a booth by the window at the Beverly Glen Deli, with a bowl of blueberries and a hamburger, or shuffling along the path of a tree-shaded park near his home in Beverly Hills. He does this circuit – deli, park, home – two or three times a day, what he calls "my daily regime", to keep in shape and to quiet his mind. "I'm anxious, depressed, I get scared a lot," says Wilson, who turned 73 on June 20th. "It's been that way for about 42 years. The park helps keep me straight. I show up feeling bad, and I leave feeling good. It blows the bad stuff right out of my brains."

On a 26-degree winter morning, Wilson walks the curving trail, his six-foot-three frame stooped and a little unsteady, but moving fast. "See that bench up there?" he says, breathing hard. "Just under that tree? We're gonna sit down there. Get ready."

We've walked about 50 metres since our last rest, in this lush oasis of palms and bougainvillea, surrounded by estates once owned by Walt Disney and Frank Sinatra, and the $18 million chateau where Michael Jackson died. "I don't normally stop to rest," he says, unconvincingly. "But I can tell that you want to stop a little bit, so I'm doing it for you."

Wilson wipes perspiration from the back of his hands onto his red Hawaiian

's Better Days

shirt and closes his eyes. With a breeze blowing through his swept-back silvery hair, and the sun shining on his pale but still-handsome face, he looks almost peaceful. "The people in Los Angeles are fucking cool," he says brightly. "The Malibu crowd, my family, the people at the deli – low-key. That's the way I like it. I don't like surprises. I'm not as adventurous as I used to be. I don't know what happened. I guess I got old. That's just the way things go."

A petite older woman with frosted hair walks past, cooing at her two tiny dogs. "Hi, Brian," she says, with a big, doll-like smile.

"Hey, man," Brian responds.

"A regular, like me," he says after she's gone. "Think she's foxy?"

Except for when he's in the studio or on tour, this is Brian Wilson's life as a senior-citizen Beach Boy: cruising Beverly Hills in his midnight-blue Mercedes, stopping for chili dogs and doctors' appointments and maybe a little exercise, then back home to park himself in his big red chair in the family room, where he listens to the Fifties station on Sirius and watches *Wheel of Fortune*, while family life swirls around him. He has no hobbies. He doesn't use e-mail or surf the Internet or read the newspaper. He lost his cellphone a few years ago and never replaced it. He rarely sees old friends. "I wouldn't even know how to reach most of them," he says, "or what I'd say."

Wilson and his wife of 20 years, Melinda, have five kids, ages five to 18, and about a dozen dogs. (Wilson also has two daughters, Carnie and Wendy, from his first marriage.) The youngest kids, Dakota and Dash, climb all over Wilson in his red chair, and the whole family is in sync with his gentle eccentricities. "At a really young age, I understood that Dad is never going to be like the other dads, but he's still dadlike," says Daria, 18, who designed the packaging (and suggested the title) for Wilson's new album, *No Pier Pressure*.

Sometimes, Wilson wanders upstairs to his music room, but he gets easily discouraged. "I can't write a song to save my life," he says. "I sit at the piano and try, but all I want to do is rewrite 'California Girls'. How am I gonna do something better than that? It's a fucked-up trip."

One afternoon, we see a matinee of *The Wrecking Crew*, a documentary about the L.A. session musicians who played on records by everyone from Nat King Cole to Phil Spector, and most famously on Wilson's mid-Sixties Beach Boys classics. The film begins with clips of Wilson in the studio recording *Pet Sounds* at age 23: the hip, confident auteur in his chunky glasses and psychedelic shirt, pushing the veteran musicians to bring to life the complex, emotional music he was striving for.

It was surreal – and a little unnerving – to sit in a theatre full of people, watching Wilson watch himself. The experience was not relaxing for him, either. He sat pressed against the back of his seat, impassive, while his younger self bounced around the tiny studio with vigour and purpose. After 45 minutes, Wilson bolted. I found him on a bench in the lobby. "That was a real ball-puncher," he said. "A heavy nostalgia thing.

"I had so much energy, I had it so together," he added. "I'd love to have some of that back."

For a guy who admits retirement may not be far off, Wilson is extremely busy. In April, he released *No Pier Pressure*, which features guest vocalists including Kacey Musgraves and Zooey Deschanel, and this summer he's playing amphitheaters and arenas in the U.S. and Europe. *Love & Mercy*, an excellent biopic starring Paul Dano and John Cusack as Wilson in different periods of his life, was released on June 25th, and the film goes a long way toward illuminating the tragedies and triumphs of Wilson's life.

All of this comes at the tail end of one of rock & roll's most unexpected and astonishing third acts: Since 1999, when Wilson launched his first-ever solo tour, at age 56, he's been on a nonstop creative roll, finishing his long-lost Sixties masterpiece, *Smile*, in 2004, touring the world with his stellar band, and even putting aside decades of tension and lawsuits to reunite with the Beach Boys for a 50th-anniversary album and tour.

Though much of his recent work has cast Wilson as a soft-rock survivor, he still shows glimmers of his edgier, idiosyncratic pop genius, especially on 2008's *That Lucky Old Sun*. On that and his two most recent albums, Wilson's best songs grapple with an uneasy subject: the end. Buried at the back of *That's Why God Made the Radio*, the Beach Boys' 2012 reunion record, is the hymnlike "Pacific Coast Highway" (which was originally intended as part of a 15-minute suite that we can only hope will one day be released in its entirety): "Driving down Pacific Coast/Out on Highway One/The setting sun/Goodbye." *No Pier Pressure* ends on a swelling, Phil Spector-style send-off with a similar, unmistakable message: "The Last Song".

"I've carried a lot of weight on my shoulders – a heavy load," Wilson says. "For me, music is about love. Love is the message I want to share. I hope people feel the love in my music. That makes the hard work worth it."

Sometimes, Wilson surprises you. Today, instead of lunch at the deli, he suggests a drive down to Malibu for sushi.

"How much gas you got?" he says, climbing into my car in his driveway, attired in his usual uniform: tropical-print shirt, sweat pants, white New Balance sneakers. His hair, perfectly slicked back yesterday, is a wavy mess today, but his blue eyes are clear and bright. He looks happy.

"We've got more than a half tank – plenty of gas."

Traffic is backed up along Sunset. "Hey, don't worry about the traffic, man," Wilson says. "Let's just relax. You got enough gas?"

Wilson asks me to set the AC to a chilly 64 [17 degrees celsius] and turn up the volume on his favourite station, K-Earth 101. He sings along to Steve Miller's "Rock 'n Me", the Bee Gees' "You Should Be Dancin'" and Queen's "Another One Bites the Dust". A few seconds into "Thriller", he asks me to hit "mute".

"Hard to handle," he says. "A little scary." Then, after a moment: "Hey, you ever run out of gas before?"

No, never.

"Well, then," he says with a nervous chuckle, "what the hell are we worried about?"

Along the way, Wilson points out the street in Pacific Palisades where he rented a house in the early Eighties, when he weighed 135 kilograms and subsisted on steaks, crème de menthe cocktails and cocaine. "I was so lazy I pissed in the fireplace," he says. "Can you believe that?" Further along, he shows me the ashram he used to attend, back when the Beach Boys got into TM with the Beatles. "I meditated

"I can't write a song to save my life," Wilson says. "I sit at the piano and try, but all I want to do is rewrite 'California Girls'."

This is contributor Jason Fine's *first feature for Rolling Stone Australia.*

my ass off," he says. "I did it for about two years. Then it stopped working, so I quit." Heading north on the PCH, he sees Moonshadows, a restaurant down the beach from where he once lived. "I used to hit that place up," he says. "Sneak out of the house, drink a bottle of wine and go dance around by myself."

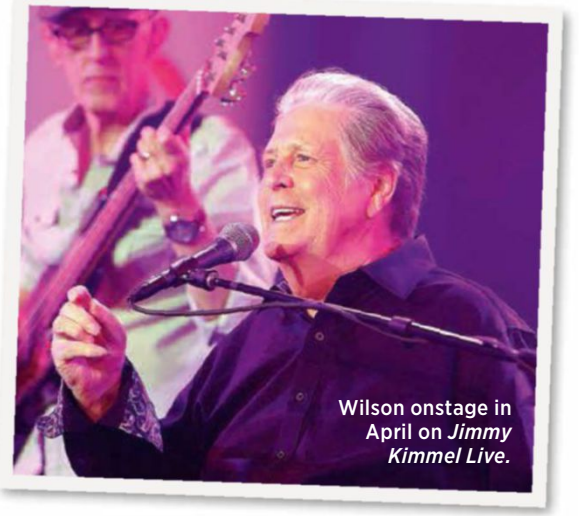
Wilson lived in Malibu from 1982 until 1995, nine of those years under the care of Eugene Landy, an unconventional therapist who was hired in 1983 to curb Wilson's drug use and get him back to work after years of erratic, self-destructive behaviour. In some ways, the Landy program worked. "I got off on exercising – I was in Olympic-style shape," Wilson says proudly. But Landy turned Wilson into a virtual prisoner: He moved into Wilson's home, relocating him to a rental down the beach; installed padlocks on the refrigerator and live-in bodyguards to monitor Wilson's behaviour; and cut off contact with Wilson's friends and family. Landy kept Wilson off recreational drugs, but he dangerously overmedicated him with sedatives and psychotropics, which left him despondent and occasionally nearly catatonic. "I thought he was my friend," says Wilson, who rarely says anything negative about anyone, "but he was a very fucked-up man."

These years are portrayed in terrifying detail in *Love & Mercy*. The film focuses on two distinct periods of Wilson's life: Dano plays Wilson in the mid-1960s, when he was producing his greatest records but unravelling emotionally; Cusack plays Wilson when he was living under Landy's care as a lost and largely forgotten man. "It was hard to watch the first time," Wilson admits. "I felt exposed. But it's a factual film. Whatever the film shows, it was much worse in real life."

One reason he made it through is because of Melinda (played by Elizabeth Banks in the film). She was instrumental in getting Landy removed from Brian's life, and since she and Brian were married, in 1995, she's helped him get proper treatment for his mental illness, as well as orchestrated his amazing career comeback. Despite many triumphs, she acknowledges it has been a tumultuous journey. "You never know what you're going to get with Brian," says Melinda one night over dinner. A former model who met Brian when she was working as a Cadillac saleswoman and he came to buy a car, Melinda has a regal beauty, and she speaks candidly about her and Brian's life together. "This wonderful, troubled guy has surprised me every single day of our 20-year marriage. His life is like a tug of war. It's up and down. That's his cycle. It's like anybody that suffers from depression. But through it all, he's the bravest, kindest person I've ever known."

Sometimes, when you're talking to Wilson, you notice that he's not looking into your eyes but somewhere above the top of your head, as if a fly has landed there and it's distracting him. Cusack, who studied Wilson's body language closely, thinks Wilson's upward focus has something to do with the way he reads people: "I was like, 'Is he looking for an aura?' He's feeling you, seeing colours and vibrations. He's not a formatted, linear political creature. He's all quantum artist. I love that about him."

Darian Sahanaja, a member of Wilson's band for 17 years, has noticed the gaze, too – he used to think Brian was just looking at his hair, which rises impressively from his forehead. "I could be three feet away from him, he'll look at my eyes for a split second and then he'll look up, as if he's seeing how high my hair's going," says Sahanaja. "He's always looking upward. It's always hopeful. He looks like maybe he's going to see an angel fly out of the top of you, then he'll know you're one of the good guys."



Wilson onstage in April on *Jimmy Kimmel Live.*

RANDY HOLMES/ABC/GETTY IMAGES

One evening last spring, Wilson passed up courtside Lakers seats because he wanted to attend his son Dylan's basketball game at a local rec centre instead. Dylan's team, the Thunder, was undefeated, and the family – Brian and Melinda, Daria, Dylan, Dash and Dakota, plus their longtime housekeeper Gloria and two nannies (the couple's other child, Delanie, 17, is away at boarding school) – headed out from Beverly Hills to root him on.

On the way, we stop for dinner at Ernie's, a favourite Mexican spot in the Valley. Wilson sits at the head of the table, sips Diet Coke with a straw and announces, "No one has to rush through dinner. We have plenty of time."

"Dylan, we're winning tonight," he adds. "I have a good feeling."

Over enchiladas and tacos, Wilson tells Dylan about his own childhood athletic career, something the 11-year-old seems totally unaware of and soaks up with glee. Wilson was a star centre fielder at Hawthorne High, a skittish hitter but a strong fielder with a great arm. "I could run the bases in 44 seconds and throw the ball from centre field all the way to the catcher. I wanted to be a centre fielder for the Yankees. That was my ambition, but I got sidetracked into the music business."

Wilson also played quarterback for the football team, but he quit senior year. "I got knocked on my back and I felt like I was going unconscious," he says. "It scared me silly. I go, 'Coach, I quit! I don't want to play anymore!'"

"Was the coach mad?" asks Dylan.

"He just said, 'Hit the showers, Wilson!'"

At the game, the Wilsons line up along a bench near one end of the floor. Brian has been known to walk across the court in the middle of the game, but tonight he sits on a folding chair next to Melinda, holding her hand.

With 11 minutes left in the second half, the Thunder are down by 10. "We might be fucked, honey," Brian says. Then Dylan's team makes a late run, partly fuelled by Dylan's two clutch free throws, and the Thunder win in overtime.

Dylan rushes to hug his dad. "See, Dylan," Wilson says. "If you stick with it, things work out in the end. Not always, but sometimes."

At times like this, Wilson seems as relaxed as I've ever seen him – goofing around with his family, sleeping as late as he wants, even soaking up a little sun in the backyard while the kids jump on the trampoline. Soon, Wilson will have to drag himself out of this Beverly Hills idyll to head out on tour – three gruelling weeks across the U.S., followed by Europe – and the anxiety is starting to creep in. "I'm trying not to think too much about it or I'll get nervous," he says, driving up Hollywood Boulevard one day. "I'll get into it and be fine, but it's hard to transition."

A few minutes later, "California Girls" comes on the radio, and unlike most times one of his own songs plays, Wilson doesn't mute it – he asks me to turn it up. "I call myself Brian Willpower Wilson," he says. "It helps me push through the tough stuff. I feel like I've got about 15 years left, so I want to make the most of it. So I'm taking things a little easier lately. When I wake up in the morning, instead of going, 'Oh, no, not another day', I'm going, 'Oh, God, thank you for another day!'"

REFUSED'S NEW WORLD ORDER



HOW DO YOU FOLLOW ONE OF THE GREATEST PUNK ROCK ALBUMS OF ALL TIME? REFUSED COULDN'T CARE LESS.

BY PAUL BRANNIGAN



"The radical nature of Refused is intact," says Dennis Lyxzén (second right)



In December 1999, Rolling Stone bumped into Dave Grohl on the set of Smashing Pumpkins' "Stand Inside Your Love" video. The Foo Fighters frontman (then dating Pumpkins bassist Melissa Auf der Maur) was enthusing to everyone on the lot about having recently discovered "the best fucking band in the world", a group he intended to take out on tour. Intrigued, RS enquired as to the name of Grohl's new crush, and received the answer: Refused. "Good luck with that," RS responded, "considering they broke up last year..." Grohl looked like he might burst into tears.

Dennis Lyxzén laughs when this story is related. It's show day four of a short U.S. club run for Refused and, while their crew hump backline equipment into San Francisco's Great American Music Hall, the mood in the camp is buoyant. Last night the quintet busted out Fugazi and Black Flag covers at their first instore performance in 20 years, tonight's gig sold out weeks ago, and the sun is currently shining brightly in Fog City, making the prospect of an afternoon trawl around the neighbourhood's vegan eateries all the more appealing for their 42-year-old singer.

"Touring wasn't always a pleasant experience in this band," Lyxzén notes. "Now we're actually able to enjoy this."

It's now three years since Refused returned to active service, with show-stealing performances at the 2012 Coachella festival followed by a 72-date world tour culminating in a brace of shows in Umeå, the northern Sweden university town where Lyxzén and his friend David Sandström formed the band in 1991. Asked for his memories of that tour, his group's first in 14 years, Dennis Lyxzén uses words such as "surreal", "crazy" and "fun": "We went away as a garage band, and came back as an arena band," he notes. "You think, 'What the Hell happened?'"

That's a question many music fans asked themselves when Refused announced their reformation. This was never supposed to happen, not least because for so long the band members themselves were so furiously opposed to the idea. Fiercely idealist, militantly left wing and unshakable in their faith in music's capacity to engage, empower, educate and liberate, Refused broke up in October 1998 during a disastrous U.S. tour: their final show, in front of 60 kids in a suburban basement in Harrisonburg, Virginia, was aborted after four songs when local police raided the premises. In the wake of their dissolution, the group issued a 'final communiqué', a scathing critique of the "rotting cadaver" of popular music, capitalist enterprise, the class system and their own inability to affect change. "We will never play together again and we will never try to glorify or celebrate what was," the statement declared. "WE THEREFORE DEMAND THAT EVERY NEWSPAPER BURN ALL THEIR PHOTOS OF REFUSED so that we will no longer be tortured with memories of a time gone by." This was no 'indefinite hiatus', but a calculated torching of bridges, an irreversible denouement to seven years of struggle. At least that was the idea...

"It was very dramatic!" Lyxzén laughs. "I loved it. Of course that communiqué got thrown back in our faces in 2012 so I reread it and I thought, 'Wow, this is a pretty fucking bold last statement.' We were a super radical band, so of course when we broke up it was going to be radical as well. Two weeks later I had another band, Refused were yesterday's news, and no-one cared."

And that's how the Refused story might have ended, had not the Umeå quartet created, as their parting shot, arguably the finest rock album of the 1990s. Drawing upon free jazz, electronica and vintage radio samples, 1998's *The Shape Of Punk To Come* remains an incendiary, revolutionary re-definition of hardcore punk ideals, a call to liberate the form in the face of mainstream assimilation, as encapsulated in its central theme "New Noise", wherein Lyxzén sings "How can we expect anyone to listen if we are using the same old voice? We need new noise." Drawn in by this rallying call, a new wave of rock fans – Dave Grohl among them – discovered the band, their cult appeal being amplified posthumously as the buzz on their swan song built to a feverish critical clamour. Now, in the face of the kind of intense scrutiny which has been concomitant with their comeback, Refused are indeed set to release new noise, a follow-up to an album considered untouchable in its field.

By its very existence, *Freedom* looks set to be the most controversial rock album of 2015. Fiercely political, urgent and confrontational, it's a bold step on from *The Shape Of Punk To Come*, incorporating funk, metal and hip-hop influences in an adventurous 10-track set which consolidates the Refused sound without ever checking a rear-view mirror. Lead-off tracks "Elektra" and "Françafrique" are already setting the internet ablaze.

"It's nice to know that there's interest," says drummer David Sandström. "I think it's important to creative people that you're not making something in a vacuum. When you feel that there's people out there that have your back, you can be courageous, and that's important. I don't see a lot of bands taking risks, but I think we are."

The genesis of the new Refused album lies in songs that Sandström and guitarist Kristofer Steen (who'd played together in the band TEXT, post-Refused) began writing with bassist Magnus Flagge for an "arty, complicated" avant-metal project in 2010. Steen mooted the idea of approaching Lyxzén to provide guest vocals for one song, which led the trio to discuss the notion of creating a Refused-style song for the vocalist. In the summer of 2012, the topic was finally broached. By his own admission, Lyxzén was initially "hesitant" to commit.

"The first thing was that I have another band [INVSN] that's been quite active for the past two years and we were starting to get some momentum," he explains. "Refused is such a big machine that when that comes into your life it kinda takes over.

"IF WE WANT TO FUCK UP EVERYTHING THAT WE ONCE WERE, THAT'S OUR PREROGATIVE."

And the second thing was just the legacy of Refused and that last record . . . maybe not even the last record in itself, but people's perception of the record, and their expectations of what new Refused music would be. But when I heard the riffs for the new record I thought, 'This is going to be good, let's try to work it out.'"

The initial songwriting sessions for *Freedom* were kept a secret from all but the band's closest friends: "That way if it wasn't working out that great we could just slowly back out of the room," Lyxzén laughs. "But the momentum just kept building."

"Honestly, the pressure of following the last record wasn't ever a concern, it never

Contributor Paul Brannigan *wrote the Nirvana cover story in RS 743.*



THE NEW SHAPE OF PUNK TO COME Refused in Los Angeles during their reunion tour, 2012

came up," says Sandström. "For me, and Kris, we've never really taken all the praise for that record all that seriously. We were just really fucking inspired by the new music."

As the songs began to coalesce, Lyxzén and Sandström fell to collaborating on lyrics. From their hothouse debates emerged involved texts discussing ideas of nationalism and privilege ("Useless Europeans"), the demonisation of violent protest as a legitimate political tool ("War On the Palaces"), patriarchy and feminism ("Destroy the Man") and faith ("Dawkins Christ"). Lead single "Elektra" centres around the lyric "Down in the dirt, nothing has changed", a key note for an album Lyxzén maintains expands upon the radical beliefs expounded on *The Shape Of Punk To Come*.

"It's still a capitalist world based on wealth and power and exploiting the weakest people," says Lyxzén, "still essentially the world we were rallying against in 1998, the world I've been rallying against pretty much my whole life. If anything, it's getting worse."

With Refused's every move now being fiercely analysed and debated, the presence of Swedish producer Shellback as a co-writer on "Elektra" (and album track "366") has caused furrowed brows: with Shellback (born Karl Johan Schuster) having co-written/produced no fewer than 10 Billboard Number 1 singles, including Maroon 5's "Moves Like Jagger" and Taylor Swift's "Shake It Off", punk purists are predictably levelling 'Sell-out!' jibes at the band. Lyxzén is matter of fact when the question of the producer's input is raised. It transpires that Refused met Schuster at "some bullshit awards ceremony" and Sandström initially sent him a couple of work-in-progress demos from the album purely to obtain some outsider perspective on their secretive studio sessions.

"He grew up listening to Refused, and hardcore and metal, so he's from our background," Lyxzén explains. "We thought he'd say like, "Yeah, that song is cool, but maybe think about doubling the chorus on that one.' Instead, we got back a new demo of 'Elektra', completely rearranged. He basically made his own version, where he played drums and guitars and sang over it in fake English, because he didn't know the lyrics. Kris called me up and goes, 'Er, Shellback's version is way better than ours.' We spent days trying to better it, but in the end we all agreed his just worked. '366' he changed less, but again, we just preferred his version."

This honesty and pragmatism will serve Refused well as they prepare to re-launch their band as a creative entity. Lyxzén and Sandström are smart men: punk rock lifers in a scene largely populated by dilettantes and tourists, they know they'll be spending the lifespan of their new record defending their art, their integrity, their legacy and their motivations. And they're up for the fight. There's a lyric in "Old Friends/New War", one of *Freedom*'s stand-out tracks, where Lyxzén sings of having "no other choice but to create some noise", and that line cuts to the heart of Refused's raison d'etre in 2015. To those who consider their continued existence a betrayal of Refused's core tenets, the singer has a blunt response.

"It's our band," he says calmly. "It's our band to do with as we will. If we want to fuck up everything that we once were, that's our prerogative, because it's *our band*. But if you hear the record you'll know that the radical nature of Refused, both musically and lyrically, is pretty fucking intact.

"Looking at the world right now, with the shitstorm that it is, this is what we do to speak out. That's why this is still important to us. And it'd be nice if we could shake some things up. Because when I look around now, I don't see too many other bands trying."

FOUR MORE ESSENTIAL SCANDINAVIAN PUNK RECORDS

Randy
Randy The Band 2005



More punk & roll than Refused, this Swedish quartet come on like a Marxist Ramones, with lyrics such as "Still vegetarian, anti-America/I'm still socialist and I still raise my fist." Righteous.

Minus
Jesus Christ Bobby 2001



Released on the Sugarcubes' label, this youthful Reykjavik quintet's ferocious second album is a terrifyingly intense, shape-shifting meld of math-core technicality and white noise.

Iceage
New Brigade 2011



Joy Division acolytes, Copenhagen's Iceage marry hardcore fury, gothic chills and angular post-punk to dramatic effect. Hipsters love them, don't let that put you off.

Turbonegro
Ass Cobra 1996

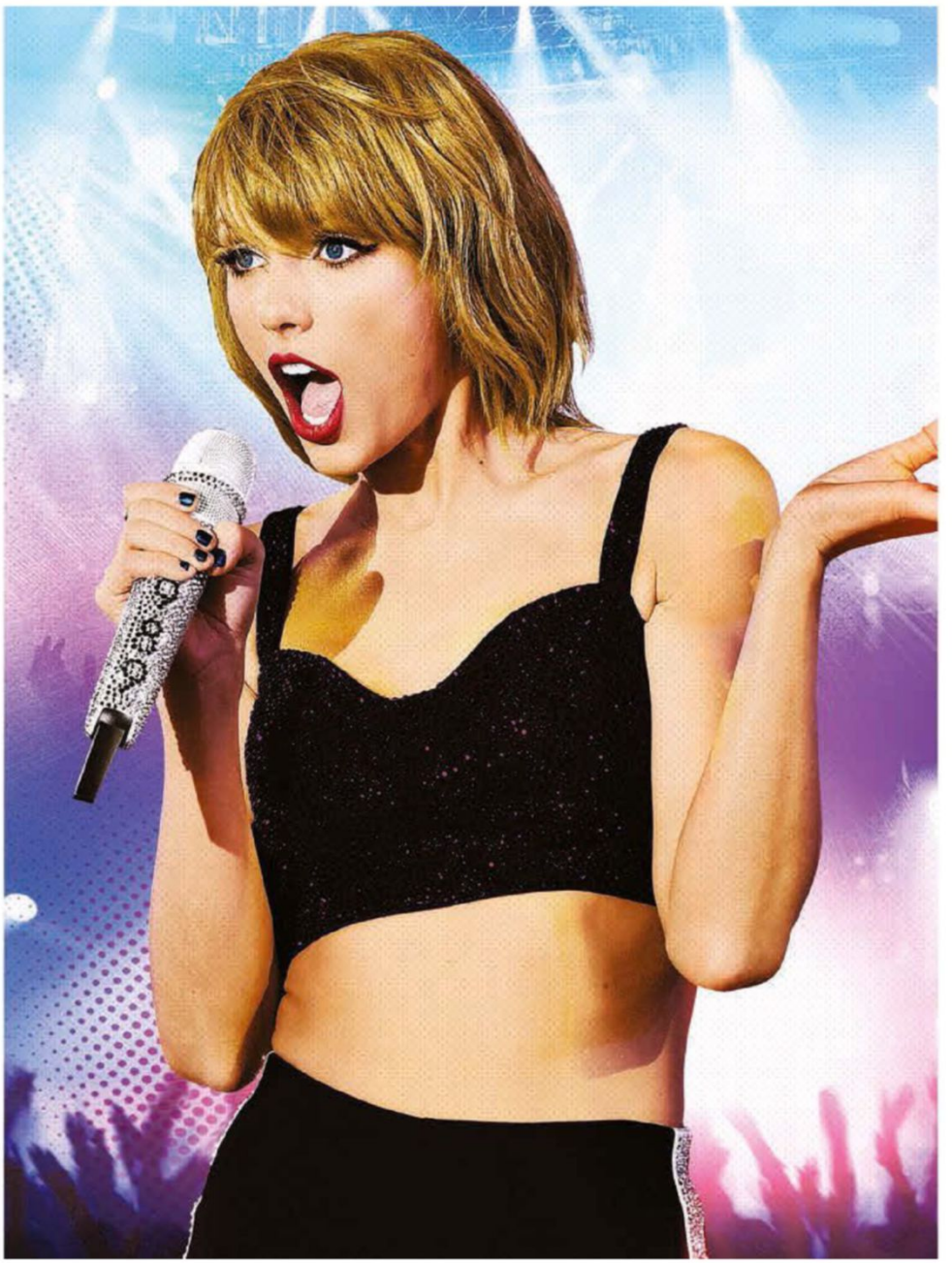


Norway's Turbonegro look deranged in denim and sailor hats and deliver a filthy proto-punk/glam hybrid with titles such as "I Got Erection" and "Hobbit Motherfuckers". Approach with caution.

PREVIOUS SPREAD: DUSTIN RABIN. ABOVE: NOEL VASQUEZ/GETTY IMAGES

The Songs That Made Me

12 stars – from Seger to Swift – reveal their musical DNA



Taylor Swift

1. "You're So Vain", Carly Simon, 1972
It was the shot heard 'round the world that left everyone debating and wondering, "Which famous ex-lover did she write it about?" I've felt the ripples of that blaring public curiosity affect my own lyrics. I was a poetry-obsessed preteen the first time I heard that incredibly genius kiss-off, "You're so vain, you probably think this song is about you." After hearing that, it was like a key had just unlocked this forbidden area of storytelling for me. You can say exactly what you feel, even if it's bitter and brazen! Almost 10 years later, I sat in my dressing room in Boston. Carly Simon had just performed "You're So Vain" with me in front of 65,000 fans. She leaned over and whispered to me who the song was written about – me, the one person who hadn't asked her.

2. "This Kiss", Faith Hill, 1998
I sang this song for my fourth-grade chorus audition. I think it changed the way I saw country music and music in general. Ev-

Illustrations by Gluekit

eryone loved "This Kiss", not just country fans. Pop and rock fans loved it too. I guess you could say that theme rubbed off on me.

3. "Lego House", Ed Sheeran, 2011
I was so intrigued by this song that I reached out to Ed to write for my album *Red*. I loved the cadence of the pre-chorus, "And it's dark in a cold December, but I got you to keep me *waa-arm*." We wrote in a Phoenix hotel room, ate In-N-Out burgers and essentially became a permanent fixture in each other's lives.

4. "Blood Bank", Bon Iver, 2009
I think this is one of the most beautiful love songs I've ever heard, because of the conversational lyrics. It's so detailed, but in a sporadic way – just like a memory. My favourite lines: "That secret that we know, that we don't know how to tell/I'm in love with your honour/I'm in love with your cheeks." It's dark, but feels romantic. I think I like this song because it reminds me of how love actually feels.

5. "The Middle", Jimmy Eat World, 2001
I remember listening to this on the bus to school. I felt comforted by it, because I never felt like I really fit perfectly into any clique at school. I wish every kid who goes through those same feelings of loneliness could hear how Jim Adkins sings, "Don't you worry what they tell themselves when you're away."

6. "Hands Down", Dashboard Confessional, 2003
My high school experience was marked by memories of house-party singalongs of "Hands Down" and driving around with my best friend screaming the words to it. It's the best recounting of an unforgettable first date I've ever heard.

7. "Backseat Freestyle", Kendrick Lamar, 2012
This past year I moved to New York, and for the first time, I was dealing with dozens of paparazzi outside my place every day. At first, I got really anxious every time I'd be about to open the car door. They'd crowd around me and yell. Then one day I put my iPhone on shuffle, and "Backseat Freestyle" came on. Something about Kendrick's voice and the beat made me feel safe. It was pretty much all I listened to that summer.



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Marilyn Manson

1. "We Are the Dead", David Bowie, 1974
I remember hearing this song in the Nineties, when I first moved to L.A. It wouldn't have had the same impact on me if I'd heard it when I was a kid in Ohio – it felt like it was about the culture of Hollywood, the disgusting cannibalism. It was a great inspiration to me on *Antichrist Superstar*.

2. "Cat People (Putting Out Fire)", David Bowie, 1982
A great song lyrically – very biting, very strong, very powerful. I never really liked this song on *Let's Dance*, but I love the version on the soundtrack to the film *Cat People*.

3. "Straight Outta Compton", N.W.A, 1988
I was in a completely different phase of music when I first heard this. I was living in Florida at the time, and I was trying to go against my environment, which was lots of 2 Live Crew and N.W.A – so I was probably listening to Jane's Addiction, the Cure and Joy Division. But eventually I listened and I thought, "You know what? N.W.A is as punk-rock as anyone."

4. "Cry Me a River", Justin Timberlake, 2002
People underestimate how badass Justin Timberlake can be. Coming from a boy band, he probably wanted to break that mould and show people his darker side, and that's "Cry Me a River". In addition, I was told by my great friend Johnny Depp that he'd "buy me a liver" if I ever needed him to, so there's that.

5. "Cocaine Blues", Johnny Cash, 1968
It's hard to pick just one favourite Johnny Cash song, but this is the one I listen to before I go onstage. I listen to the version that he played at Folsom Prison – the one where you can actually hear his voice crack. You can hear that grit in his throat. It makes it real.

6. "Hey Joe", Jimi Hendrix, 1967
This song is similar to "Cocaine Blues" in that they're both about killing a woman. It's sort of like how we call tank-top shirts wife-beaters. It's strange that that's part of American culture.

7. "The End", the Doors, 1967
I played some shows with the surviving members of the Doors a couple of years ago. I did "Five to One", I did "People Are Strange" – but I would never do "The End". No one touches that song. That's sacred. Even though it came out earlier, "The End" really feels like it defines 1969, the year I was born: Altamont, Woodstock, the end of the Summer of Love and all that shit.

8. "I'm Eighteen", Alice Cooper, 1971
One of the first songs that I heard by Alice Cooper when I was growing up. I listened to it because my mother, who loved Neil Diamond and the Bee Gees, also loved Alice Cooper. At the time, it didn't make me think, "I'm going to be a singer." But I could identify with it. It felt true, and it will always be true. Much later, I toured with Alice and I got to sing it with him, which was a childhood dream come true.

9. "Today", Smashing Pumpkins, 1993
Billy Corgan and I became friends about 15 years ago, when I was working on *Mechanical Animals* and he was working on what would become *Adore*. Even before that, I always loved this song. People might think of it as a happy pop song, but it's actually very dark. When he says, "Today is the greatest day", it's an ironic statement, and people don't catch that.

Bob Seger

1. "I'm Looking Over a Four Leaf Clover", Art Mooney, 1948
The first song I ever sang for my parents. I was four years old, sitting in the back seat of our '49 Buick Roadmaster. They were in stunned silence, then they said, "He can sing!" That was the moment I knew.

2. "Hound Dog", Elvis Presley, 1956
"Hound Dog" is the reason we all did it. It's Elvis at his youngest and most explosive. When I was 10, I picked up my father's bass ukulele, and this was the first thing I learned to play – this and "Don't Be Cruel".



3. "Running Scared", Roy Orbison, 1962
Absolutely stunning to this day. Roy's voice is one in a million. This is really his version of Ravel's "Boléro".

4. "It's Alright, Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)", Bob Dylan, 1965
Dylan opened up limitless possibilities for lyrics in one fell swoop. Everything you want to know about him is right here – he's absolutely lucid and direct, which was unusual for him back then. He taught me how to sell a song.

5. "Me and Bobby McGee", Kris Kristofferson, 1970
This is the definitive narrative song that really got my songwriting going. I don't think I would have written "Night Moves" without hearing it.

6. "Gimme Some Lovin'", the Spencer Davis Group, 1967
When I heard this, I said, "This is the kind of music I want to write." If you listen to my first single, "Ramblin' Gamblin' Man", there's a B-3 organ – just like on "Gimme Some Lovin'". And for 49 years now, I've never played a show without a Hammond B-3 organ.

7. "Didn't You Know (You'd Have to Cry Sometime)", Gladys Knight and the Pips, 1969
Gladys was the best female singer on Motown, and this song has an unbelievable vocal. I love her.

8. "What'd I Say", Ray Charles, 1959
After I heard this song, I *had* to have a Wurlitzer. A few years later, I wrote "Turn the Page" on that Wurlitzer! So it's very important to me.

9. "Jumpin' Jack Flash", the Rolling Stones, 1968
This is my favourite Stones song of all time. It's pretty damn strong. It brought my guitar playing up, too – I simply had to be able to play that Keith Richards lick and sing it at the same time. I wouldn't stop until I was able to do it.

10. "You've Really Got a Hold on Me", the Miracles, 1963
I was singing this live even before the Beatles did it. The girls in the audience loved it.

Kacey Musgraves



1. "For the Good Times", Ray Price, 1970
This might be the saddest song of all time. It really breaks my heart.

2. "Broken Things", Julie Miller, 1999
I had a guitar teacher who introduced me to Miller. This song is one of the firsts that made me fall in love with songwriting.

3. "You Ain't Woman Enough to Take My Man", Loretta Lynn, 1966
What a total sass-bucket she is! And smart, too! Loretta is a massive influence. This song has always made me laugh.

4. "Heart of Gold", Neil Young, 1972
My dad played Neil around the house a lot. This inspired me to pick up the harmonica.

5. "Mr. Blue Sky", ELO, 1977
This song was so ahead of its time. I used to listen to it on repeat. It's just otherworldly.

6. "Gentle on My Mind", Glen Campbell, 1967
Glen has played a huge part in inspiring my music. I think he was ahead of his time, too. The melodies, the instrumentation and the wonderfully classic writing – country at its best.



Mark Ronson

1. "Who Got Da Props?" Black Moon, 1993
In high school, I started getting into underground New York hip-hop – I would tape these radio shows late at night. I heard this song, and I had to go buy the 12-inch. That's what led me to DJ'ing.

2. "Cult of Personality", Living Colour, 1988
At the same time, I was playing in bands. We were five city kids – two white kids, three black kids, all of us 14 or 15. Living Colour was all we wanted to be.

3. "Cut the Cake", the Average White Band, 1975
Their approach to rhythm guitar was so tight.

4. "Dream Come True", the Brand New Heavies, 1990
I loved this instantly. It was sweet but funky.

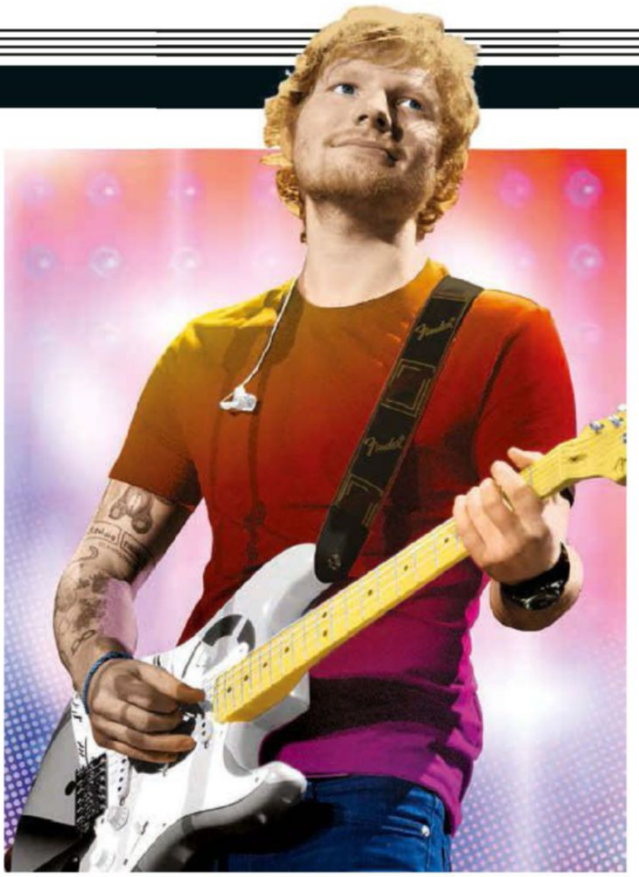
5. "They Reminisce Over You (T.R.O.Y.)", Pete Rock and CL Smooth, 1992
This is definitely the first hip-hop song that ever made me cry from emotion.

6. "Work", Gang Starr, 1998
When I was starting to make beats, nothing influenced me more than wanting to be DJ Premier. He almost had the feel of a great rock drummer.

7. "Superwoman (Where Were You When I Needed You)", Stevie Wonder, 1972
I was dating this girl in L.A., and it wasn't going well. I went out there, and she dumped me. So I bought a cheap electric piano and figured out how to play this song.

8. "Remember (Walkin' in the Sand)", the Shangri-Las, 1964
Amy Winehouse played this for me the first day that we met. I listened to it that night and came up with the main piano chords for "Back to Black".

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Ed Sheeran

1. "Cannonball", Damien Rice, 2002
Seeing Damien Rice perform when I was 11 changed my life forever. After seeing him play this small club in Ireland, I was able to meet him, and he was unbelievably cool. I went straight home and started writing songs. I would not be doing what I'm doing now if he'd been a jerk.

2. "Layla", Derek and the Dominos, 1970
It sounds a bit clichéd, but Eric Clapton made me want to play guitar. I saw him perform "Layla" at the Queen's Jubilee on TV when I was about the same age – 11 – and said, "I want to do that." Of course, no one plays like Clapton, least of all me.

3. "Stan", Eminem, 2000
Believe it or not, my dad was the one who bought me *The Marshall Mathers LP*. I think he read an article that compared Eminem to Bob Dylan, and he loved Bob Dylan, so he figured it had to be good. He wasn't wrong. Eminem is still my favourite rapper of all time.

4. "Ricky", the Game, 2011
The Game is one rapper that I constantly look up to. He has so much passion and feeling in this song. You know everything he does is the truth.

5. "Irish Heartbeat", Van Morrison and the Chieftains, 1988
I'm a big Van Morrison fan. My parents used to play this album on our road trips when I was a kid, so it really takes me back. The album is a collaboration with the Chieftains, and the entire thing is incredible. This is the title track.

6. "Guiding Light", Foy Vance, 2013
I've been a huge fan of Foy since I was 14 or 15, and this is one of my favourite songs of his. When he set out to make his first album in years, *Joy of Nothing*, he asked me to join him on the recording of "Guiding Light". It's one of my proudest moments.

7. "Do You Remember", Jarryd James, 2015
I heard this while I was in an Australian radio station last week, and I had to find out who the singer was. Ends up he's a young lad from Brisbane, and this is his debut single. I just love the sound.

8. "White Foxes", Susanne Sundfør, 2015
I love when friends introduce me to something I've never heard of. My friend Christina Perri bought me Sundfør's album *The Silicon Veil*, and it's simply ambient brilliance. I could sit for hours listening to it.

9. "A Million Miles Away", Rory Gallagher, 1973
This was the first song I learned on guitar. The story goes that when Jimi Hendrix was asked how it felt to be the greatest guitarist in the world, he answered, "I don't know. Go ask Rory Gallagher."

Father John Misty

1. "Let's Fall in Love Tonight", Lewis, 1983
The first time I went over to my wife's place, she had this playing in the background. The album didn't exist outside of a private pressing of a thousand copies or something – this was a couple of years before it was reissued. We would listen to it all the time, and it ended up being the song that Emma walked down the aisle to.

2. "On the Beach", Neil Young, 1974
This song is about isolation, but ironically it's one of the great love songs of my life. "The world is turning/I hope it don't turn away" – I really identify with that. The whole B side of this album, you can just put it on and get lost. You can get stoned and go inside this little universe. And when the song ends, go back to the beginning.

3. "When You Awake", the Band, 1969
Emma and I both love this album – we listen to it a lot at home. It's got all these minutiae of an imaginary agrarian life. This one is for those days where I'm in my bathrobe doing a crossword puzzle sporadically for six or seven hours.

4. "The Tea Song", Michael Hurley, 1964
Michael Hurley is the songwriter laureate of some quantum-wobble alternate version of planet Earth. When I listen to this song, I feel like I get to be part of that world. It just fills my head with images.



5. "God Is in the House", Nick Cave, 2001
Prior to meeting Emma, I had a blind spot for Nick Cave. I didn't realise how funny he was. This song knocked me on my ass the first time I heard it.

6. "My World Is Empty Without You", Diamanda Galas, 1988
Diamanda Galas is one of the more powerful individuals walking among us. She may be the only satanic gospel singer out there. The title of this song sounds like an admission of weakness, but there's this unbelievable power and agency in it.

7. "Life's a Bath", John Frusciante, 1997
Frusciante is a guy who, parallel to his hugely successful day job in the Red Hot Chili Peppers, was making unprecedently naked music on his own. That's fascinating to me.

8. "Chimes for Dreams", Jeff Bridges, 2015
This album is what I see myself doing in 30 years. There's a moment on the album where he's brought his recording rig to the breakfast table, and the interaction between him and his wife is so sweet, but also weary.

9. "Eternamente", Nilla Pizzi, circa 1953
She's an Italian chanteuse from the Fifties. There's this unnameable quality that throws everything around you behind some kind of haze – this song just does that for me.

PHOTOGRAPHS USED IN ILLUSTRATION, FROM TOP: JASON MERRITT/GETTY IMAGES; EMMA TILLMAN

Peter Wolf

1. "Put Your Finger in the Air", Woody Guthrie, 1950
This was the first record that I owned. It always takes me back to a child's simple delight, in following along with Woody's commands.



2. "Heartbreak Hotel", Elvis Presley, 1956
I remember the exact moment I heard it coming from a first-floor window while I was sitting on a stoop in the Bronx. I was totally transfixed by the lonely feeling of the recording and the effect that Elvis' voice had on me. It was a born-again experience.

3. "That Lucky Old Sun", Louis Armstrong, 1949
His early recorded version of this song is pretty hard to top. I remember when my father took me to see Armstrong at New York's Roxy Theater. That helped make me a hardcore jazz fan.

4. "Maybe Tomorrow", the Everly Brothers, 1958
This was the flip side of "Wake Up Little Susie", but for me it was a Number One. It still gives me goose bumps when I hear it.

Brian Wilson

1. "Rhapsody in Blue", George Gershwin, 1924
"Rhapsody in Blue" is the first song I ever heard. When I was a little boy, very young, I heard it and said, "Mum, Mum, play it again!" I loved the part where the violins came in. I just got this overwhelmingly beautiful vibe from the music.

2. "Be My Baby", the Ronettes, 1963
This is the song that inspired me to produce records. When I first heard it, it blew my mind. The drum sound that Phil Spector got, the harmonies, the piano and guitar sounds – I thought it was the greatest record I ever heard.

3. "With a Little Help From My Friends", the Beatles, 1967
What a fantastic song. The lyrics are so expressive and different. "Could it be anybody?/I just need someone to love" – oh, I really love that part.



4. "My Obsession", the Rolling Stones, 1967
"Satisfaction" is my second-favourite song by the Stones. This one is my favourite. They invited me down to their studio in Hollywood when they were mixing it. I remember sitting there and feeling that energy and that excitement.

5. "Johnny B. Goode", Chuck Berry, 1959
I met Chuck Berry one time on an airplane. I said, "Hi, I'm Brian Wilson!" He goes, "Hey", and then he turned away. He wouldn't talk to me. Too bad. But he taught me how to write rock & roll songs.

6. "You Stepped Out of a Dream", the Four Freshmen, 1955
This is where I learned to arrange harmonies, and also where I learned to sing falsetto. Their four-part harmony was totally original – not five or three parts, but four parts. Wow.

7. "Rock Around the Clock", Bill Haley and His Comets, 1954
I remember the first time a friend of mine played this for me on the phone. I just wanted to hear it over and over.

8. "Mr. Tambourine Man", Bob Dylan, 1965
"Hey, Mr. Tambourine Man, play a song for me/I'm not sleepy, and there ain't no place I'm going to…." I love those lyrics, really love them. "Poetic" is the word.

Mavis Staples

1. "Blowin' in the Wind", Bob Dylan, 1963
Bobby was a cute little guy in the Sixties. He had the curly hair and, oh, man, we had big fun at all the folk festivals. He's the world's greatest poet as far as I'm concerned. He just laid it on the line here: The answers are passing us by, blowing in the wind.

2. "Since I Fell for You", Buddy and Ella Johnson, 1945
I fell in love with this song walking past a juke joint on my way to school every morning. When I sang it at a grammar-school variety show, my uncle snatched me off the stage, pushed me to my grandmother's house and told her, "This young'un is up at the schoolhouse singing the blues." Lord, I got the worst whipping in my life!



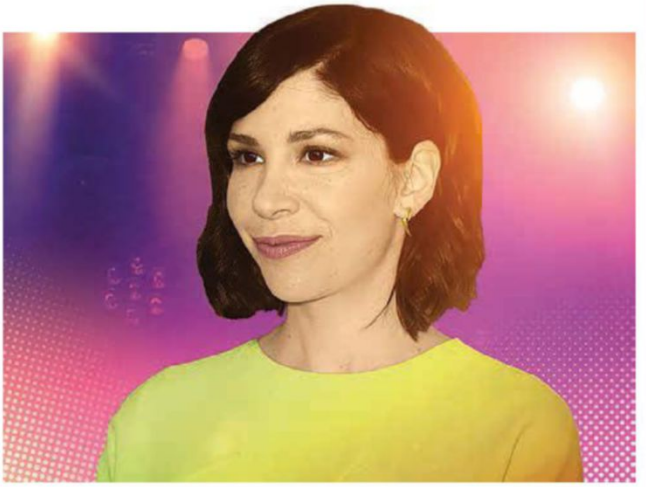
3. "Why (Am I Treated So Bad)", the Staple Singers, 1965
Back in the 1950s, there were nine black children trying to integrate a white school down in Little Rock, Arkansas. They would walk to school with books in their arms, and they would be spat on and called horrible names. My father, Pops Staples, watched that, and he said, "Why you treating them so bad?" And then he wrote this song. It turned out to be Dr. Martin Luther King's favourite.

4. "A Change Is Gonna Come", Sam Cooke, 1964
Sam Cooke was in my older sister's grade – we all went to school together. Sam's group and my brother Purvis' group would sing in church, and they'd have battles, with us children in the audience eating potato chips and drinking pop. Later, when Sam recorded "A Change Is Gonna Come", it would bring tears to my eyes every time I heard it.

5. "The Weight", the Band, 1968
Being in *The Last Waltz* was

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Carrie Brownstein



1. "Carey", Joni Mitchell, 1971
There's something strange, when you're a kid, about a song that says your name. Of course, Joni Mitchell is talking about a man named Carey, but I didn't know that. I was so drawn to it – the song seemed to recognise me in some way, which set me on an emotional course for looking for validation in songs.

2. "Song for a Future Generation", the B-52's, 1983
A friend of mine made me a mixtape in high school with 90 minutes of the B-52's. I had already started immersing myself in punk – the Ramones, the Clash, the Buzzcocks – but there was something about the singing of Kate Pierson and Cindy Wilson that excited me. It felt subversive but slightly saccharine, and it was very fun and strange.

3. "Margin Walker", Fugazi, 1989
Fugazi were my boy band for my teen years. I missed the first wave of hardcore, but the aggression of their music really matched my own angst and frustration. I just wanted to thrash around to "Margin Walker" the way that earlier I would have jumped around to New Kids on the Block or Duran Duran or something.

4. "So Tough", the Slits, 1979
Discovering the Slits and their album *Cut* was such a formative moment. The image of these women caked in mud on the cover was so shocking and exciting. "So Tough" was the song that I put on every mixtape. It feels like they put the contents of a junk drawer into a bag, and they're shaking it, and then they were able to string together something melodic on top of that chaos. I wanted that song around all the time.

5. "Dumb", Nirvana, 1993
When I moved to Olympia to go to college, there was this sort of marketplace where the commodity was musical knowledge. That was how people judged and valued each other. I had a friend whose sister worked in Seattle, and he gave me a tape of *In Utero* well before it came out. It felt like I was carrying around a magic stone all summer.

6. "Natural's Not in It", Gang of Four, 1979
The sound of Gang of Four was revelatory for me – even before you hear the lyrics, the acidity of the guitar playing tells you what this band is. "Natural's Not in It" is about how our own bodies and desires are commodified, and as a female I always felt that. It's such a catchy rallying cry of revolt.

7. "Can't Hardly Wait", the Replacements, 1987
When I started touring with Sleater-Kinney, I would listen to this song. It had this soothing lullaby quality. I loved the line "I'll be home when I'm sleeping" – that really spoke to me as a young travelling musician. I would put on my headphones and feel understood.

8. "Anti Love Song", Betty Davis, 1973
This whole song, she's fighting herself. It's a groan, it's a growl, it's full of desire. The lyrics are all about denying herself what she wants, and you can feel that struggle. It's like she needed that groove to propel herself through her pain and her longing. I love it.

9. "John the Revelator", Son House, 1965
I would go to record shops all the time on tour, and there was a period when I was collecting a lot of blues records. "John the Revelator" really drew me into blues music. It just seemed so big coming from one guy.

10. "I'm Going to Live the Life I Sing About in My Song", Mahalia Jackson, 1958
There's a power of conviction in this song. She's speaking in terms of good and evil and sin, and she sings with the kind of authority that a lot of people try to sing with. Even as someone who's not religious, that's really appealing to me.

PHOTOGRAPHS USED IN ILLUSTRATIONS, FROM TOP: JASON LAVERIS/FILMMAGIC; DAVE J HOGAN/GETTY IMAGES

the most beautiful thing that ever happened to the Staple Singers. I still can't get offstage without doing "The Weight". We were already close friends with the Band by then – with Levon Helm and Robbie Robertson and Rick Danko. Danko would keep you laughing! He was really cool.

6. "You Are Not Alone", Jeff Tweedy, 2010
When Tweedy wrote this song for me, I was just getting started again after my father had passed away. It's one of the most beautiful songs I ever sang. If you think about it, I'm all alone now. I'm the last standing Staple Singer, and I'm divorced. So when I sing this song, I mean it. I'm with you – I'm lonely, too.

Jack Antonoff



1. "At My Most Beautiful", R.E.M., 1998
If you don't cry listening to this song, I can't help you. The line "I found a way to make you smile" is at the heart of what it means to love someone.

2. "Call It Off", Tegan & Sara, 2007
The first time I heard this song, I was in one of those regional death-trap airplanes, and it started to uncontrollably shake. I was like, "I'm dying." This song started to play, and it took me away.

3. "Forever", Dropkick Murphys, 2001
This doesn't fit into their general style – it's kind of an Irish ballad – but it's the ultimate friendship song.

4. "Only You", Yaz, 1982
So short and crisp. A huge touchstone for Bleachers.

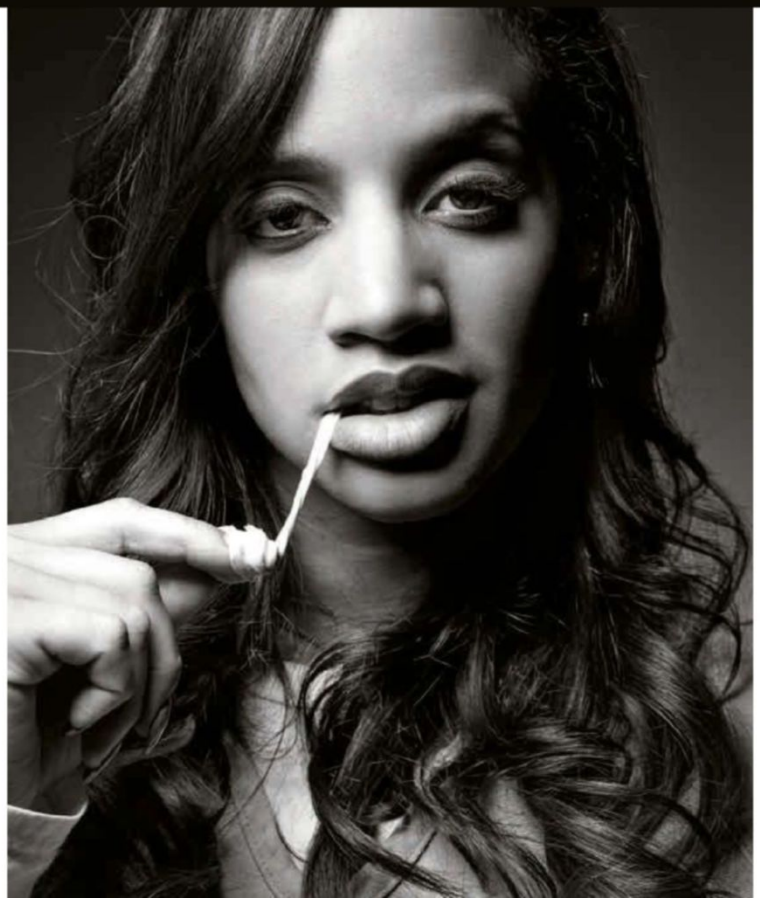
5. "Beautiful", Christina Aguilera, 2002
It's not necessarily *cool*, but it's got this superclassic feeling. I can imagine Queen doing this song.

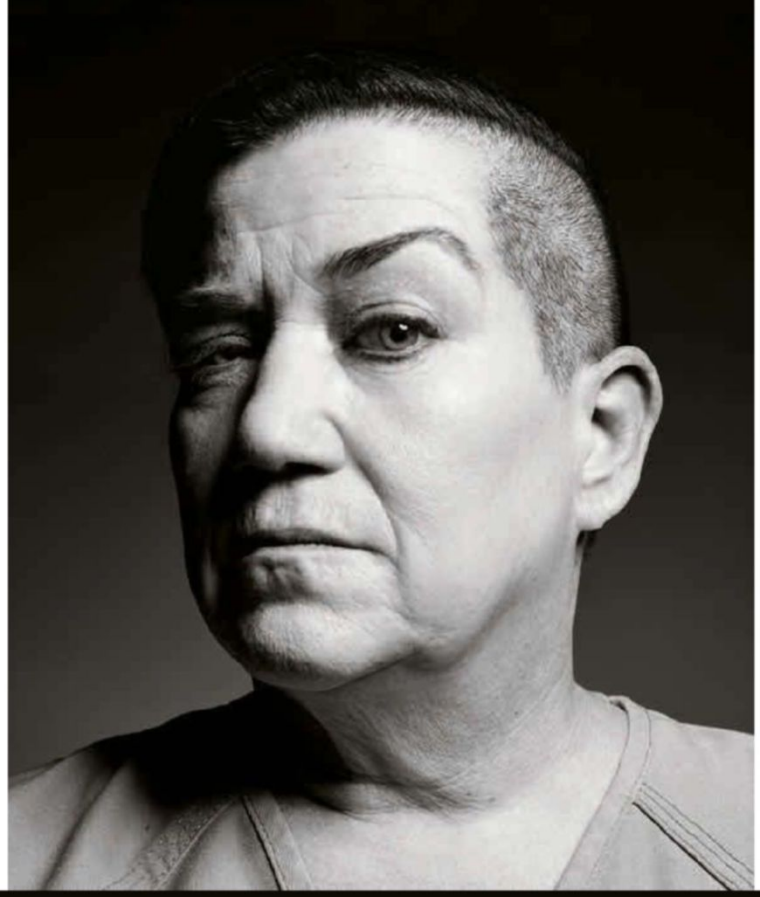




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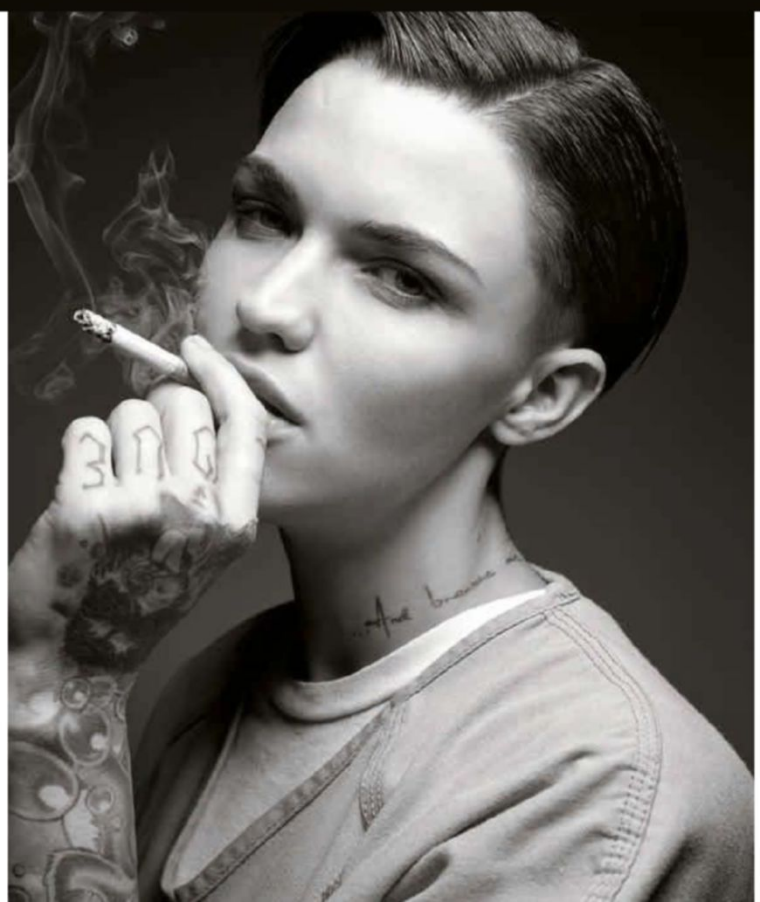
How did the unlikely stars of 'Orange Is the New Black' revolutionise television?

BY MAC McCLELLAND

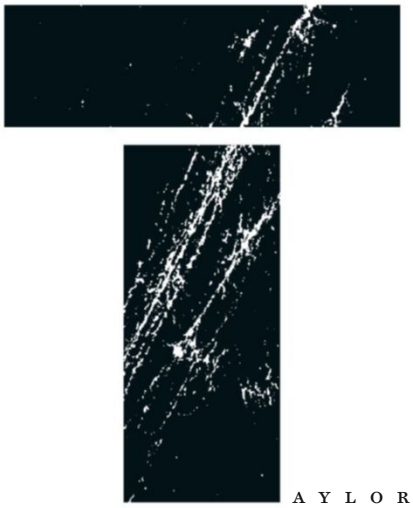
PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK SELIGER

PRISON BREAK

Before *Orange*, several of its stars were thinking of quitting acting. Clockwise from top left: Taylor Schilling, Laura Prepon, Lea DeLaria, Laverne Cox, Selenis Leyva, Ruby Rose, Dascha Polanco and Uzo Aduba.







AYLOR

Schilling has been to a lot of therapy. "So much," she says on a recent Sunday stroll along the Hudson River, near her apartment in Manhattan. "So much therapy." As such, the 30-year-old, whose face is makeupless and guileless in the sun glinting off the water, is supremely well-adjusted. She does not drink. She does not publicly discuss her personal life – who she's dating, why so much therapy – other than to say, "If you're really living it, life is complicated." She is grounded in her petite frame, speaking and walking very slowly, and, as a nice person, worries for my job security if I don't come away with something exciting to say about her. "Let's see how we can get you something that's fun but that's not 'how I lost my virginity'," she says, but ultimately can't think of anything juicy. Except maybe to wonder why her bosses haven't hooked her up. "I'm paying for fucking Netflix," she says. "I wanted to talk to somebody about that."

In short, Schilling is not fucked up, unlike her *Orange Is the New Black* character, convicted drug-money-smuggling Piper Chapman, who is at turns clueless and manipulative and superior. Schilling calls her "not particularly endearing", but she has nevertheless captivated audiences as the lead of Netflix's biggest cultural hit since it started pumping hundreds of millions of dollars into original content. In its second season, the show became the most-watched series on Netflix, which has more than 60 million subscribers worldwide. Last year, "Piper" was on the list of most common baby names for girls.

Likable or not, Piper is exactly what Schilling was looking for. Raised in Boston by professional-class parents, Schilling dropped out of a grad-school arts program to audition for roles, and got some – on the short-lived *Mercy,* in *Argo,* even in a Nicholas Sparks vehicle that had her making out with Zac Efron. "I wanted to do stuff that I believed in," she says. "But roles for women can really be like an appendage to someone else. It's either the best friend or a girlfriend – you're not at the seat of your own narrative." She had decided she wasn't going to take parts like that anymore, period, even if it took her offscreen. She was prepared to work in low-rent theatre. Possibly she'd have spent a lot of time "reevaluating" at her grandmother's house, in Maine.

"It's funny, when you totally are just like, 'I am *pbbbtt*'" – she blows a raspberry – "that's when things come in. I wasn't reading very many scripts, but my agent was like, 'This is a really great script', and she was right. There were so many different parts of this lady," Schilling says about her role. "She wasn't defined by any one thing."

This is why *Orange Is the New Black,* which has won more than 20 awards for its adaptation of Piper Kerman's memoir about her year in a women's prison, is not just a popular show but a historic event: It has *ladies* in it. Ladies who are doing things we never see ladies in entertainment do – the highest bar for which is currently just interacting with other ladies about topics that don't revolve around men. *Orange* – as the cast abbreviates it – is full of killing, fucking, supporting, loving, scheming, desperately masturbating ladies, living in a prison system we generally try hard to forget about, played by actresses we don't often see either.

This doesn't count Schilling, of course; or Laura Prepon, previously known as the tall and gorgeous Donna on *That '70s Show* but now as the dominating and calculating Alex, another white, femme "lesbian", who joins Piper in prison for sex, power plays and lovers' spats. After eight years on *'70s* and two shows after that, Prepon, at 32, had declared a moratorium on doing TV and was looking to make movies, but when she read *Orange,* she set up an audition immediately, originally reading for the role of Piper. She says *Orange* has "definitely shifted my perspective" on television. "A lot of the movies that I see right now, the material isn't even close to as good as what I get to do every day."

But for the rest of *Orange*'s cast, creator Jenji Kohan, who became a lady everybody wanted to work with after the eight-year success of her creation *Weeds,* put together an ensemble of underrepresented actresses – a transgender actress in the role of a transgender woman, a big fat butch dyke actually played by one, a number of actresses who had altogether given up on the business after realising they were too old, too African, too Latina, too gay or too heavy for Hollywood.

Kohan, a bespectacled 45-year-old who's known for dying her ringlets an array of rainbow colours, cared as much about having big stars in her new project as she does about those awards she's won ("What matters is that people are watching it and enjoying it and talking about it. In terms of the cycle of awards, they can all fuck themselves"). "I'm a huge believer in the audition process, in the right person for the right role, not because of name recognition or fame," she says. "I'm looking for actors to service the character, not the other way around."

The result is a show that's widely been touted for its unprecedented diversity. Kohan has admitted that she used Schilling's white protagonist to basically trick networks into being interested in *Orange.* It's not the only trick she's pulling – together her marginalised lady-cast uses its incredible talents to engage audiences with perhaps the most marginalised population of all: prisoners. Entertainment isn't the only industry that Kohan, who grew up in L.A. with a showbiz father and a novelist mother, thinks needs reforming. "Our prison-industrial complex is out of control," she says. "It's an embarrassment; it's one of these things we'll look back on and say, 'What were we thinking?' It's something that needs to get talked about, and I'd love to start that conversation. But I can't be didactic about it. I'm here to entertain. This is my activism."

This season, *Orange* has 14 series regulars, whose backstories humanise the invisible, criminal untouchables they play in varyingly heartbreaking and hilarious ways. As in last season, they make up so much of the narrative that Piper barely qualifies as the lead anymore. "What's beautiful about *Orange* is you see this motley crew of women," says Uzo Aduba, who, at 34, is one of several actresses on the show who quit the business before they got their roles – Aduba as Suzanne Warren, better known as Crazy Eyes. "When I first came to work, I would be like, 'This looks like the Island of Misfit Toys.'"

"OUR PRISON SYSTEM IS AN EMBARRASSMENT," KOHAN SAYS. "I'M HERE TO ENTERTAIN, BUT 'ORANGE' IS MY ACTIVISM."

This is Mac McClelland's *first feature for Rolling Stone Australia.*





WOMEN ON THE EDGE

"Actor years are like dog years. I was struggling," says Brooks (left). For Lyonne (right), *Orange* has been a comeback.

WHEN KOHAN WAS casting the part of Sophia, the transgender hairdresser, she couldn't have known that Laverne Cox was going to become an icon. "I can't predict the future, but I knew I wanted a real transgender actress to play the role. And Laverne was the best."

When I sit down with Cox, on a couch outside a photo shoot, the 31-year-old admits that her ideas about *Orange* may be "grandiose", but to be fair, the actress was working in a restaurant just three years ago, and has since been on multiple magazine covers and is set to be featured as a transgender lawyer in an upcoming CBS pilot.

"We've revolutionised television," she says. "The unprecedented diversity that we just saw in pilot season I think would not be possible if it weren't for us."

Growing up in Alabama with a single mother who "worked like a dog" and a twin brother – he plays Cox pre-transition in flashbacks on *Orange* – Cox liked to dance and alter thrift-store clothes, and was bullied mercilessly. Her current career was barely fathomable then, when there were zero transgender people on TV. She attempted suicide at 11. Now she is one of the most prominent faces of the transgender community, a visibility that she knows is important, "particularly in what bell hooks calls 'imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy'."

The pressure of that responsibility can be intense – "It's too much, because I'm a flawed human being" – in addition to exposing her to the constant scrutiny of bigots. The night before Cox and I meet, someone sent some transphobic commentary her way on social media. "And that hurt," she says. But Cox has loads of coping tools for dealing with bullies (she too has had therapy: "Tons. Tons"), one of which is making a list of all the reasons she is beautiful, which she did. She starts to cry when she talks about this. "I'm really tired, so I'm gonna be emotional today," she says.

For all its ugliness, Cox credits the Internet with the progress that's been made since her childhood. "It's been a way to connect; it's also been a way to amplify our voices, to amplify our points of view. I believe there are so many trans stories to tell, and they have yet to be told."

Orange gave her the platform to tell some of them. Without the show, Cox says, "I wouldn't be here."

SHE'S NOT THE ONLY ONE.

Aduba meets me in a coffee shop in Chelsea, wearing not the trademark knots in her hair but long, silky-straight locks and an immaculate flowing-pant and fitted-sweater ensemble. The daughter of Nigerian immigrants and a track star in high school, she'd discovered her passion for acting while studying opera at Boston University's conservatory, but before she'd quit the industry at the tender age of 31, she'd never even been on TV or in film. And not for lack of trying; she'd appeared in plays, and gone to audition after audition. But "even in theatre, I didn't see me," Aduba says. "I didn't see difference, or it being celebrated." It was the day she left an audition for *Blue Bloods,* a role she knew she wasn't going to get, that she quit.

"I was like, 'I am done. I give up and I'm giving it up'," she says. "And I was on the train in tears, not like bawling, but you know, that kind of cry – the tears you can't, like, stop them. I had given up on all of it. It was so hard on my heart, because I loved it." She was going to go to law school. That would make her family proud, anyhow.

Aduba went home and ordered sushi and wine to facilitate her pity party, and turned on a recorded episode of *Oprah's Master Class* to keep her company. There was Lorne Michaels, talking about how in the beginning *SNL* had been panned and he was debating whether to quit, and a dreamy image came onto the screen during his voice-over, a swing hanging from a tree backed by a pink sunset, and then the words, as he said them, "Keep the faith." It was 5:43 p.m. on September 14th, 2012, and she felt the message all the way through her. And her phone rang. It was her agent. She'd gotten a part on *Orange.*

Later, she went back and watched the Lorne Michaels *Master Class* episode again. At the part where she saw the image and the words "keep the faith": They

SET DESIGN BY BRIAN CRUMLEY AT ROB STRAUSS STUDIO. COSTUME DESIGN BY JENNIFER ROGIEN. COSTUME SUPERVISION BY MELISSA STANTON. MAKEUP BY KAREN REUTER. MANDY BISETI AND STACY ST. ONGE AT THE MILTON AGENCY. HAIR BY ANGEL DE ANGELIS, VALERIE VELEZ AND DIEDRE HARRIS AT THE MILTON AGENCY.

weren't there on the screen. They'd never been there.

When I ask how she feels about having manifested-slash-hallucinated an epiphany in a Lorne Michaels *Oprah* special, Aduba, who is all seriousness and graceful gestures – not that jerky stuff Crazy Eyes does, but a dancer's moves – toward her heart or the universe as she talks, says, "Who cares? Because I know that's real."

There are enough real-life redemption stories within *Orange*'s fictionalised redemption story to fill an entire episode-long montage. Take Selenis Leyva, the 40-year-old Cuban-Dominican-American who plays Gloria, the Santeria-dabbling kitchen goddess. Raised in the Bronx, before *Orange*, she'd been a working actress for 20 years, getting parts on everything from *The Sopranos* to *The Good Wife*, but "I couldn't find continuous work," she says. She was getting old by Hollywood standards, and she was told after auditions that "I'm not Latina enough, because a Latina's not supposed to be Afro-Latina."

Leyva had a daughter to support, so she decided to quit. "I was at a point in my life where I wasn't going to act anymore," she says. But then her agent called, and…well, you know how this goes now.

Or take Lea DeLaria, the aforementioned and self-proclaimed big fat butch dyke who brings you *Orange*'s Big Boo. Drinking a glass of vodka the size of her face at the Palm Restaurant on the West Side of Manhattan, she recounts over a steak lunch how a few years ago she quit acting, and the rest of the country along with it. Tired of getting little walk-on parts, she packed up her things, got rid of her apartment and got on a plane to London, where she'd been making a great living off her career as a renowned jazz vocalist and stand-up comic. She'd only just landed when she saw she had 12 missed calls from her manager telling her she better get her ass back for this Jenji Kohan role she'd just got.

DeLaria, 57, is a former Midwestern Catholic schoolgirl who is as crass in person – she told me a joke over lunch about diarrhea so graphic that it would be cruel to repeat – as she is on the show. She too invokes a cast comparison to the Island of Misfit Toys, where "old showbiz Broadway ho's" like herself, 63-year-old Annie Golden (Norma), who was in *Hair*, and 74-year-old Beth Fowler (Sister Ingalls), who's been in *Sweeney Todd*, work with Kate Mulgrew (Red) of *Star Trek: Voyager* fame as well as "all these young girls who've never worked before".

For her part, Big Boo contributes heavily to the show's confrontation of "normal" TV sexuality. "Having me have sex with a dildo was, like, the greatest thing ever," DeLaria says of a scene in the new season. "Because when do you ever see that?" Kohan has said that her policy toward sex, in general, is the more sex, and the more graphic, the better. Consider a line in Season Two – validating to women who have sex with women everywhere – when the character Poussey (who is also a lesbian in real life) and her girlfriend are impotently attempting to smash their vaginas together until the former gives up, and says, "I told you scissoring wasn't a thing."

"I laughed so hard at that," DeLaria says. She shakes her head, lamenting scissorlocking, and a culture that can only understand lesbian sex as physiologically ridiculous. "What a fucking waste of time."

"My politics and my humanity are more important to me than anything," DeLaria says. "Laverne and I see what's happening for us as an opportunity to advance some politics that are very dear to us."

The gay agenda, I joke?

"Well, for Laverne, it would be the trans agenda. For me, it's the butch agenda. Just to fuck as many girls as I possibly can."



BAD ROMANCE

Above: Schilling and Prepon's torrid affair returns this season. Right: Kerman (left), with Kohan, wrote the *Orange* book "to get people to think differently about who's in prison".

Make no mistake: a crew of self-identified misfits does not an offscreen disaster make. "We are not going to be the example for how women don't work together," Aduba says Kohan (whom she calls "a mama bear") made clear.

"Jenji said from the beginning, 'I don't want any assholes on my show'," says Leyva, who attributes the no fighting or bitching and the good feelings to the struggles the actresses have been through. "We're all grateful for this opportunity to be on a show that's not about how skinny or young you are," she says. "We know what it's like to audition and be told you're not the right type."

There's Dascha Polanco, who says, "I don't take the opportunities rendered for granted because it's hard for me as a Latina in Hollywood. You know, the insecurities of growing up not being able to see someone you can relate to in the media." Polanco's prison-guard-impregnated character, Daya, is so über-calm that I'm completely unprepared for how animated she is, putting her hands on my arm or leg frequently to emphasise a point – or for her to kiss me, which she does immediately when we meet. She was a single mother who was working in a hospital when she got the role in her late twenties.

There's Danielle Brooks, the 25-year-old "baby" of the regulars, who plays Taystee. She struggled to get roles after graduating from Juilliard – "Actor years are like dog years. I was struggling so much and I was auditioning so much and I got so many no's" – as well as with "self-love as a curvy, plus-size woman". Fans have told her that they connect with *Orange* because "people see themselves".

There's Ruby Rose, the Season Three genderqueer newbie who, OK, as a 29-year-old Australian model is not the last person you'd expect to see on TV, but who had to compete with more than 50 actresses for her part. And since the show's "acting is at the highest level", she worried "a little bit, like, am I gonna be good enough? Am I gonna do a good job?"

Whatever the reasons these women aren't assholes, "This is my life," Kohan

FROM TOP: JOJO WHILDEN/NETFLIX; JP YIM/GETTY IMAGES

says of her policy against working with hard cases. "I spend the bulk of my life at work, sadly, and it's too short to spend your time with people who make life unpleasant."

Therefore, as DeLaria puts it, "There's not one diva bitch cunt on our show."

If you've ever wondered if the actors who play your favourite prison personalities are the types of people you'd be lucky to serve time with – or have as, say, best friends or wives – the answer is yes. As I meet and talk on the phone with a parade of actresses, each one is as kind and adjusted as the last. Many of them perhaps owe their *compos mentis* to the amount of therapy they've been through. In addition to Schilling and Cox, DeLaria went to "10 years – it was a lot of therapy"; Leyva says that anyone who hasn't gone to therapy, "I need to talk to them and ask them what's going on"; Aduba has been, too. Those of them who aren't into therapy are at least into spirituality. Brooks, the daughter of a Baptist minister, calls herself "grounded in faith". Polanco says she's into "energies" and "practices" like reiki and stones. "I would call myself spiritual," says Prepon, who was raised Catholic and Jewish, and is now a Scientologist. Prepon says she never gets upset, and when I press her to remember the last time she was, about anything, she comes up with nothing.

"THEY FOUND A LOT OF US AFTER WE HAD ALREADY BEEN THROUGH OUR OWN PERSONAL HELLS," NATASHA LYONNE SAYS.

Kohan says she doesn't accept the perception that to be a genius, one also has to be a maladjusted dick – "I call bullshit" – and Polanco says the sense of entitlement you might see on other sets is nonexistent on *Orange*. Leyva thinks the show has to be about the work, because it sure as shit isn't a beauty contest. "We have no makeup on, or added imperfections – they give you bigger pores, or highlight a pimple or bags under your eyes. We all look bad."

Except, Leyva says, for Prepon. "She manages to make that look sexy somehow. She always looks good, but I'll forgive her."

Of all the redemption stories surrounding *Orange*, Natasha Lyonne's is the most dramatic. "She was looking for a second chance in the business," says DeLaria. "And she hit the ball out of the park."

In person, Lyonne is as rowdy as any fan of her character, Nicky, the ex-junkie, acerbic but sweet, semi-predatory lesbian of Litchfield penitentiary, would hope her to be. We sit in her Manhattan apartment, which is full of World War II and Holocaust memorabilia ("See, this is also after the war, 28th of December, 1945, 'cause my grandparents are Holocaust survivors, so I guess they had, like, fur coats.…And now see this, this is a drawing of SS officers killing Jews, see?"), having a smoke break (Marlboro's shortened 72s, because "I'm, like, five feet two or something, so I feel like I probably have smaller lungs; real cigarettes are made for a person five-five or taller") before we take a car to Midtown to drop off a borrowed diamond bracelet to her godmother ("This was a gift from one of my godmother's lovers to her. Yeah, I do think that she must be very good at having sex"). Lyonne tells me she's going to pee, then clarifies, "From my peehole." Then she asks me how many holes I have down there, and then blames the question on her character.

"This is it, Nicky is in my blood now," she says. The character's confidence has bled into her psyche, and it makes her more "cocksure" about asking questions, hitting on people and sending text messages. Not so much in bed, though. "Mostly just because sex is distracting, and if it feels good, you aren't really being like, 'Oh, I'll show you my next move.' Hopefully you're not that in your head about the whole thing, like, 'You're never going to believe this shit I can do.'"

Unlike the rest of her castmates, who as children were children, Lyonne has been on TV since she was six, starring in *Pee-wee's Playhouse*. When she was in her twenties, after a big part in *American Pie*, she drove onto a sidewalk in Miami Beach and was arrested for DUI. Later, she was very publicly evicted for allegedly harassing neighbours and threatening to molest a dog. After that, she was hospitalised for a long time for heroin addiction, hepatitis and a heart infection. "I had to learn how to walk again," she says.

As soon as she read the script for *Orange*, "I started telling [Kohan, and the producer and the director], 'Listen, all this junkie business, I know all of this stuff. This is my language, guys.'"

She never did hard time, but she was arrested a few times. In a way, she was perfect for a show adapted from a book that was written "to get people to think differently about who's in prison and why they're there and what happens to them there," says Piper Kerman, the real Piper, whom I meet in Washington, D.C. These days, when Kerman's not writing, she's a prison-reform advocate. Though she lives in Columbus, Ohio, where she's teaching writing at two prisons, she's in town as the keynote speaker for a fundraiser. "From my perspective, the show does that as well." It's a happy dovetailing, the visions of this activist/former convict and the activism project of a famous producer.

Piper in real life actually bears some resemblance to Schilling's Piper on the show – but tougher. At the fundraiser, for Voices for a Second Chance, an organisation that supports people during and after their incarceration, she stands sure and sturdy in a sea-foam dress with back cutouts and killer heels. Every eye in the crowd is on her as she talks about the impossible odds stacked against the 700,000 people who are released from prison every year.

Orange is not a documentary filmed in real time, obviously. And as the episodes have progressed, the adaptation has moved further away from any truth about Kerman, who is an executive consultant on the show. "Like the screwdriver," she says, referring to a plotline involving a stolen tool and some DIY dildo-making. "There's a whole thing with a screwdriver in the book, and they did something really different with it on the show." But "a book affords you the opportunity for introspection and can illuminate internal conflict in a way that is verging on impossible to put on the screen. A show that tried to do that would be incredibly boring. You need external conflict." What matters is not whether *Orange*'s material is fiction, which it almost entirely is – just that its viewers "recognise these millions of people who are in prison right now as human," Kerman says, "and as interesting and as people who are of value."

According to Lyonne, no one is better suited to that cause than *Orange*'s actresses. "They found a lot of us at a moment in our lives where we had already been through our own personal hells," she says. Those travails are far from ending up in prison, but the cast "can draw on it" as they play these real-looking people making choices, and having sex, that can be bumbling, or self-serving, or life-ruining.

"It's important to be frank about all these things," Lyonne says about her own past. "It would make it easier on all of us if there was not so much shame around being human." She says, "That's very much why people respond to the show as much as they do." Because ultimately, we humans like watching other humans who fuck up, but still have good hearts, offering some hope that we might be redeemable, too.

15 OTHER MUST-SEE SHOWS!

'Orange is the New Black' isn't the only series to obsess over. Here are some new shows and returning favourites due to hit our screens shortly By Rob Sheffield

Ballers

Dwayne Johnson, Rob Corddry



The Rock charms John David Washington on *Ballers*.

Could any star have a more quintessentially 21st-century career than the Rock? From WWE to his loincloth days (*The Scorpion King*) to his heart-tugging *Walking Tall* remake with Johnny freaking Knoxville, he's a one-man pop-culture anthology. It's fair to say he's outlived any reasonable career expectations three or four times over. Now he makes his big move to drama in HBO's *Ballers*, which is basically a football version of *Entourage*.

The Rock plays an ex-NFL stud who washes out of the league – no money, no future, just a nasty painkiller habit. But he scores a new gig in Miami as a financial manager to the sports stars. He tries to advise his high-paid baller pals on how to stay out of trouble ("No more fucking Twitter!") and act like mature adults, i.e., stop having sex with bottle-service girls in the back of the club. But he has to face his own identity issues now that his jockstrap days are done. Needless to say, this involves partying on yachts with topless models.

There's a Vince, there's a Turtle, but, best of all, Rob Corddry (from *Hot Tub Time Machine*) takes the Jeremy Piven role, as the sleazebag suit who hires the Rock to recruit NFL clients, or "monetise my friendships". When the Rock lands a big client, Corddry responds, "Hey, would you mind if I took you in my mouth right now? The whole shebang?" And like Piven on *Entourage*, Corddry steals every scene he's in: "You should see my *other* yacht – but I loaned it to Prince and he took it to Mallorca."

Power

Omari Hardwick, 50 Cent, Lela Loren



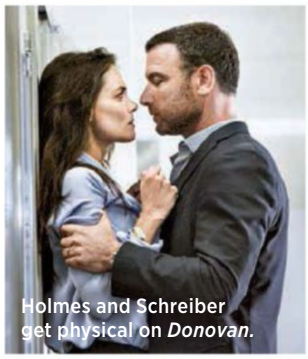
50 goes gangsta.

50 Cent's crime drama returns, with more money, more problems – and a surprisingly big upgrade in the drama level. Ghost (Omari Hardwick) lives a double life as a nightclub owner who's also a drug dealer – wait, that's a double life? At any rate, the combo gets him in trouble: His underworld connections keep him from going legit. Especially when he falls for Angela (Lela Loren), a childhood girlfriend who grew up to be a federal attorney.

Power's first season got better as it went along, but the second instalment gets a major boost from Fiddy himself, as Ghost's old gangbanging partner Kanan. He just got out of prison after 10 years, and he's got plans to start a whole new thug life. Maybe part of the reason *Power* got sharper is the fact that *Empire* blew up – amplified by 50 Cent feuding with Taraji P. "Cookie" Henson over the similarities. But whatever the reason, *Power* has definitely stepped up its game. Best moment: Fiddy commands a henchman to hold his coat while he beats a rival gangster to a pulp, then walks back calmly waving a wad of bills, saying, "Let's go get some fucking egg rolls, kid! That shit made me hungry."

Ray Donovan

Liev Schreiber, Ian McShane



Holmes and Schreiber get physical on *Donovan*.

Liev Schreiber's L.A.-via-Boston Irish superthug may have started out as a fairly generic cable antihero – but he gets more interesting every season, now that he's less of a family man and more of a free-wheeling criminal operator. Ian McShane (*Deadwood*'s Al Swearengen) is the new MVP in the cast, as a louche gangster. ("My father was a criminal, Mr. Donovan. He ensured that I didn't have to be.") And

FROM TOP: JEFF DALY/COURTESY OF HBO; MICHAEL DESMOND/SHOWTIME; MYLES ARONOWITZ

as McShane's daughter: Welcome back to prime time, Katie Holmes!

Jon Voight also returns as Ray's lowlife dad, Mickey, but the story is less dependent on him – his character has run out of steam and his scenes are essentially filler. McShane is now the real heavyweight for Schreiber to tangle with here, and it's pure pleasure to see them interact, especially since his charismatic presence balances out Schreiber's no-facial-expressions-ever approach. "Kafka said that in man's struggle against the world, you bet on the world," McShane muses at one point, with that evil purr in his voice. "But with people like us, you bet on the man. You most definitely bet on the man."

Deutschland 83

Alexander Beyer, Sonja Gerhardt, Jonas Nay

Germany's answer to *The Americans* – an eight-part Cold War thriller set amid the nuclear paranoia of 1983, the year of Nena's "99 Luftballons", complete with subtitles. Jonas Nay plays the young East German spy who infiltrates the army on the other side of the Berlin Wall. *Deutschland 83* captures the mood of a divided city, with two overheated empires eyeball to eyeball. The nuclear stakes couldn't be higher – in the opening scene, a TV plays an actual Ronald Reagan speech where he's chillingly cheerful about the idea of winning a nuclear war against the Evil Empire. ("Let us pray for the salvation of all of those who live in that totalitarian darkness" – damn.) It sets the scene right down to the synth-pop on the radio. It's not the first TV thriller to use Peter Schilling's "Major Tom (Coming Home)" (who could forget Gale's karaoke video on *Breaking Bad*?), but *Deutschland 83* really reminds you what a morbid song it is – a sarcastic kiss-off to a self-destructing planet.



Lost meets *Splash* in *Sense8,* with Naveen Andrews and Daryl Hannah.

Sense8

Miguel Ángel Silvestre

These are skimpy days for science fiction on TV, so it's been a minute since there's been a project with the ambition of *Sense8*, from the *Matrix* creators Andy and Lana Wachowski. Eight different people from all around the world suddenly find themselves sharing senses, from a Korean martial-arts queen (Doona Bae) to a Bay Area trans woman (Jamie Clayton) to an Icelandic DJ (Tuppence Middleton). How did their identities meld? What happened to link their senses, and what does that mean for their individual lives? Who is this Mr. Whispers and why are his as-

Q&A

DENIS LEARY'S BROKE-DOWN ROCK FANTASY

On Keith, Bowie's love of comedy, and Louis C.K. By David Fear

We caught up with Denis Leary as he prepares to star as Johnny Rock, an aging bad-boy frontman, in FX's new comedy *Sex&Drugs&Rock&Roll.*

Why a series about a middle-aged, coke-snorting one-hit wonder?
When I went to Emerson College, there were all these students that became musicians – guys who played in Ozzy's band and the Del Fuegos. These were the guys who thought fame was everything. They're still living that rock & roll lifestyle, but they didn't make it – what the fuck do they do now?

Johnny and his guitar player, Flash [John Corbett], are like an old married couple.
They're like the Steven Tyler and Joe Perry of Nineties CBGB's bands. I like the dysfunctional-family dynamic of a band, and those guys are the bickering parents that keep it together. It's the Mick-and-Keith thing.

Your character takes a lot of his recreational lifestyle from Keith's playbook....
I got to hang out with the Stones around the *Voodoo Lounge* tour, and those guys... Keith, it's almost beyond a lifestyle how he functions. He's never really high or drunk, either. It's different if you don't have his genetic gift, or you're like Johnny and drinking Jack Daniel's at 9 a.m. to find your "muse". Me, I'll take coffee, thanks.



Leary as Johnny Rock

How did you get actual rock stars like Dave Grohl and Joan Jett involved?
I've known Dave for decades, and Joan I knew from this concert we do every year for the Michael J. Fox Foundation. Here's the fucking galling thing: I told them, "So, I just want to improvise a few scenes, have you talk about the band." And I filmed them for two hours and they were all fucking hilarious! Like, I'm not really a rock star, how are you guys so funny? And on my turf – that's what really fucking pisses me off. What can't they do? Fucking unbelievable.

Stand-ups are like rock stars, aren't they?
The similarities are kind of astonishing, actually. Rock stars love comics. Once, I was hosting this show and David Bowie was there. I went out to have a smoke, and there's Bowie, one of my favourite rock stars of all time. And all he wanted to do was talk comedy! [*In British accent*] "What's Steven Wright really like, Denis? What's Bobcat Goldthwait really like?" I just had five minutes with my hero, and he just wants to know about stand-ups!

You're writing, producing and sometimes directing the show, and starring in it – it's the Louis C.K. model of showrunning.
Yeah! I just thought I should write it myself because I know what I wanna do. But people forget that other than *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia,* FX wasn't really doing comedy. Louis C.K. changed that, so I guess I should be giving a percentage of the show's profits to him. [*Pauses*] Fuck, now I owe him money! If this is successful, I'm fucking screwed.

FROM TOP: MURRAY CLOSE/NETFLIX; PATRICK HARBRON/FX

sassins hunting them down? With each character boasting wildly different backstories, it's *The Matrix* by way of *Orange Is the New Black*.

Jonathan Strange & Mr. Norell

Bertie Carvel, Eddie Marsan, Marc Warren, Charlotte Riley

Harry Potter meets *Pride and Prejudice*? The only question is how an idea this brilliant had to wait so long to happen – all the frippery of a BBC period drama, all the powdered wigs and stockings and bodices, except it's a tale of magicians helping 18th-century England defeat Napoleon, full of wizardly spells and political intrigue. Based on Susanna Clarke's 2004 bestseller, it pairs the gallant young Jonathan Strange (Bertie Carvel) with Mr. Norell (Eddie Marsan), the grumpy coot from the York Society of Magicians. It's like they split Benedict Cumberbatch in half: Carvel gets all the dashing charm, Marsan gets all the surly cumberbitch hauteur.



Jonathan Strange & Mr. Norell

Odd Mom Out

Jill Kargman, Olivia Oguma

What are the networks supposed to do, after depleting the world's population of real housewives? Invent some new ones. *Odd Mom Out* turns the *Real Housewives* scenario into a sitcom. It's still the same formula – a hothouse collection of rich ladies complaining – though, weirdly, it seems *less* scripted now that it's officially scripted. Jill Kargman is the high-strung Upper East Side mum, surrounded by lacquered socialites she despises, while her husband (*The Office*'s Andy Buckley) suggests, "Just be yourself – on Xanax."

Fear the Walking Dead

Rubén Blades, Cliff Curtis

A spinoff doesn't have to spin *that* far off from the original, right? And given the ongoing blockbuster success of *The Walking Dead*, you have to bet the as-yet-unseen *Fear the Walking Dead* will not feature well-behaved zombies who patronise their local library and obey traffic signals. Creator Robert Kirkman is behind this prequel going into the origins of the zombie apocalypse.

Difficult People

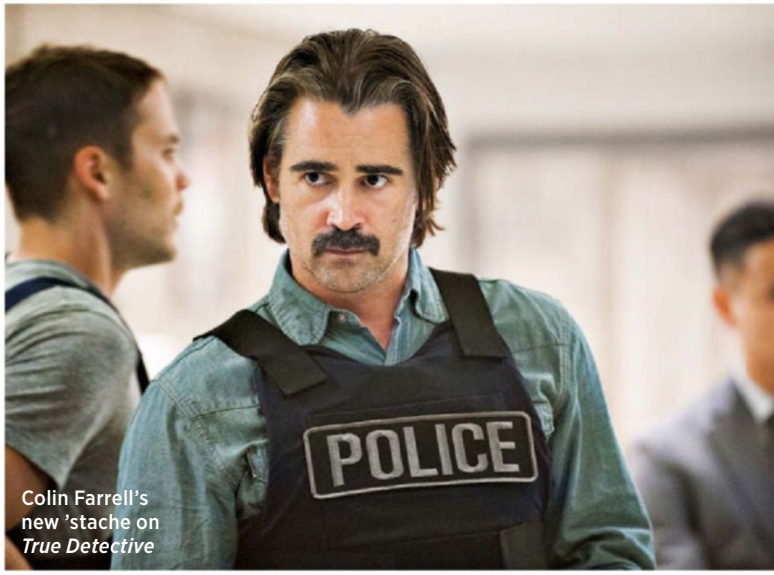
Billy Eichner, Julie Klausner

The year's most tantalising comedy prospect for sure – it's the boy/girl *Broad City*, produced by Amy Poehler. *Difficult People* stars two brilliant comic upstarts, Billy Eichner and Julie Klausner, as best friends scrounging in NYC for fame, fortune and the occasional slice of ass. A Charles Nelson Reilly and Brett Somers for our twisted time.

Blunt Talk

Patrick Stewart, Jacki Weaver

You wouldn't expect to see the captain of the *Enterprise* blowing rails in Hollywood. But then, you wouldn't expect a comedy throwdown between Jonathan Ames (of *Bored to Death* fame) and Seth MacFarlane, starring Patrick Stewart (Captain Jean-Luc Picard himself) as Walter Blunt, a blow-sniffing British TV chat-show host lost in L.A., where he flaunts his bad habits and worse manners. Make it so!



Colin Farrell's new 'stache on *True Detective*

Wet Hot American Summer: First Day of Camp

Janeane Garofalo, Paul Rudd

Yet another bizarre chapter in the long-running afterlife of MTV's cult comedy classic *The State* – 14 years after it barely even got released, *Wet Hot American Summer* gets its long-prayed-for second coming. It's the prequel the world was waiting for. David Wain and Michael Showalter revive their beloved teen flick as an eight-episode miniseries. And they bring back the original cast, so many of whom went on to stardom – Bradley Cooper, Amy Poehler, Paul Rudd – as well as newcomers like Jon Hamm, John Slattery and Kristen Wiig.

Caitlyn Jenner Finally Gets Her Own Damn Show

Caitlyn Jenner

It's so confusing when *Keeping Up With the Kardashians* lags this far behind the latest breaking Kardashian news – they can't even keep up with themselves! But, obviously, this winter's Kardashian du jour is the oft-neglected Caitlyn Jenner, ever since she discussed her identity as a transgender woman. ("I wanna know how this story ends" – easily the coolest words any Kardashian has ever said, admittedly not a tough competition.) So E! jumps into action with this eight-episode series, *I Am Cait*, but it's all Caitlyn, all the time. Poor Brody – Caitlyn's son will host the new E! chat show *Sex With Brody*, but he's gotten scooped already.

True Detective

Colin Farrell, Rachel McAdams

The most intensely awaited show by a mile. *True Detective* faces a damn near impossible task: how to start over and begin a new mystery that can live up to Matthew McConaughey and Woody Harrelson. Nobody's ever attempted an encore like this before, and nobody knows how the results will look. Creator Nic Pizzolatto is back to write all the episodes, while Cary Fukunaga is executive-producing instead of directing. The cast is promising, with Taylor Kitsch and a moustache-chewing Colin Farrell. And Vince Vaughn reteams with Rachel McAdams, all these years after he met her in church for *Wedding Crashers*.

FROM TOP: LACEY TERRELL/HBO; MATT SQUIRE/JSMN LTD./BBC

JACK BLACK'S DARK COMEBACK

Why the star of the grim satire 'The Brink' left feel-good laughs behind

By Jonah Weiner



WHEN JACK BLACK WAS A first-grader, he loved *The Six Million Dollar Man* so much he tried to convince other kids that he was bionic: "I'd go to school with these wires poking out of my sleeves," he says. Black is at a brunch spot in Los Angeles. He's wearing a T-shirt with a chaotic magic-marker whorl on its chest, courtesy of his youngest son, Tommy, and he's recalling the origins of his own chaotic creativity: how he first got hooked on hoodwinking other people. "There was a lot of fraud in my youth," he says. In addition to his bionics infatuation, Black was fascinated by the supernatural, so "I orchestrated a séance with a Ouija board, where I rigged a room with strings to make the books and stuff move, and invited kids over, dimmed the lights and made everything perfect, so the kids would say, 'This is real!' I wanted them to believe in magic." He pauses. "And I also wanted them to believe in me."



Black with *The Brink* co-star Aasif Mandvi

Things weren't great at home. Black's parents, both scientists, fought their way toward divorce during his childhood; as Black mediated between them, he contemplated someday working as a therapist, in order to help others connect. When he went into show business, he did so out of a similar desire, although more specious motivations were at play, too: "When I see cults, or people that have that cult-leader impulse, I feel like I can understand that. They're frauds, just trying to get people to believe in magic. Under different circumstances, I definitely could have started my own cult."

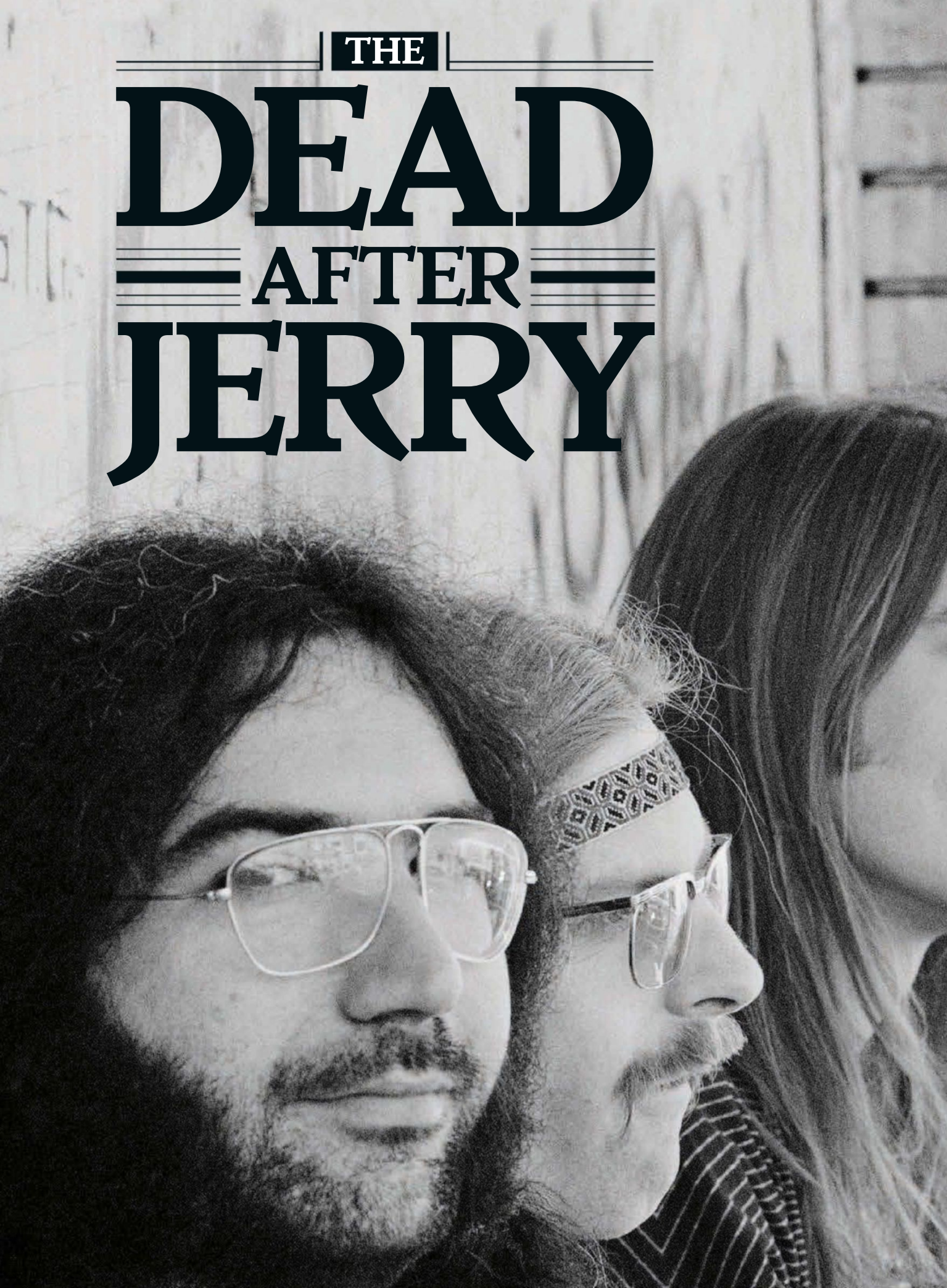
Black is in the midst of a run of impressively unmagical roles. In *The D Train,* a bleak indie comedy, he stars as a high-school-reunion coordinator who cruelly deceives the people who love him and has a very debauched hookup with his idol from adolescence (James Marsden). "He's an irredeemable guy," Black says of his character, grinning. Coming soon is the grim HBO sitcom *The Brink,* in which Black plays an unscrupulous White House minion who stumbles into a geopolitical crisis. Think *Dr. Strangelove* for the *Homeland* era: "There's so much human error at the high levels of government, which felt underrepresented in television," he says.

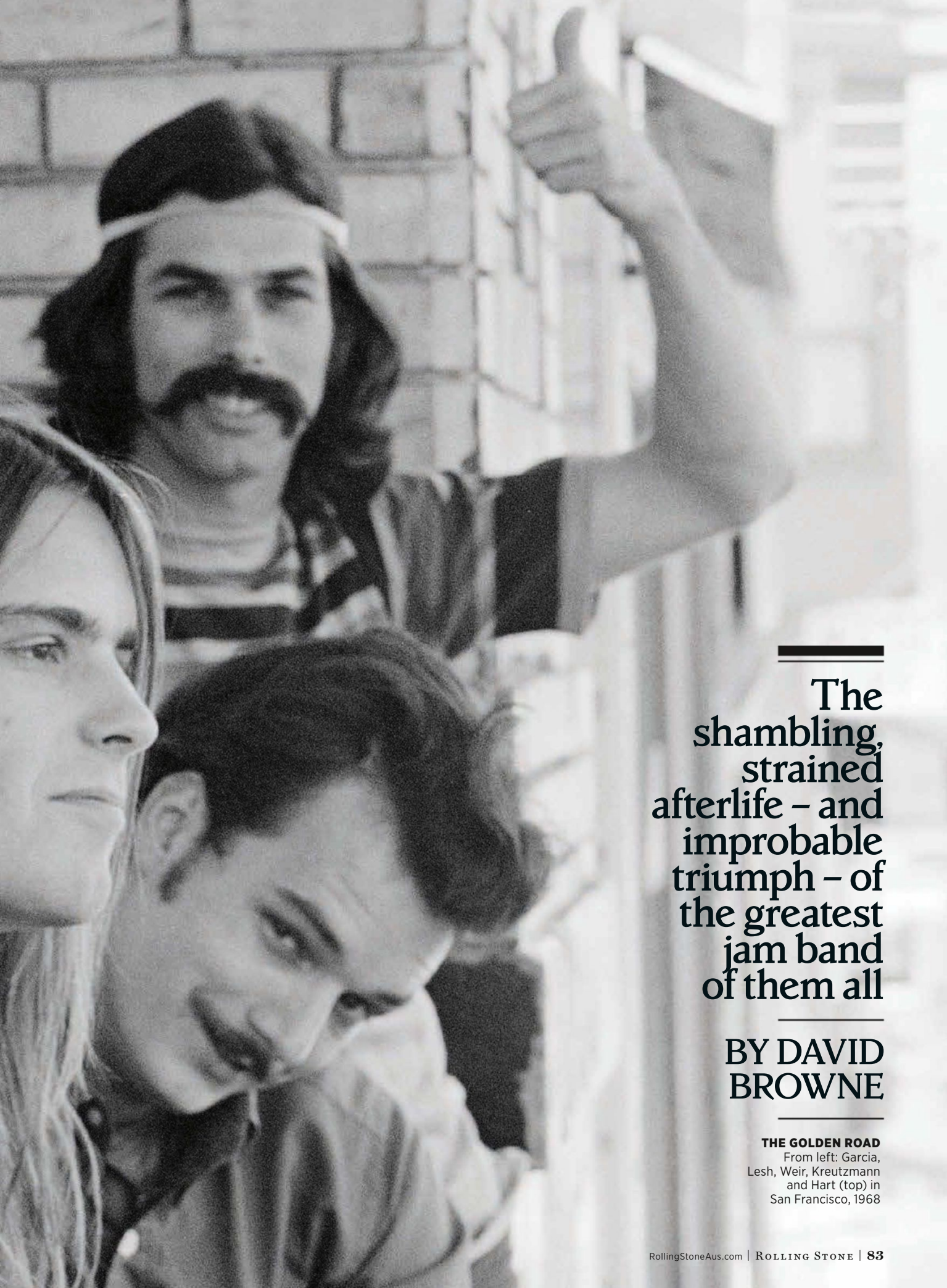
Black's willingness to sully his cuddly persona is remarkable. "Maybe that's just what turns me on now," he says. "It feels more realistic to me, more like what people are really like." He connects this change in artistic priorities to a reversal in his personal life. "There was a flip-flop," he says. Back in his crowd-pleasing *School of Rock* period, "I was the guy who hated weddings, thought they were all tedious and maudlin. And now I cry my eyes out at weddings, but I only want to play really shitty people. Maybe having kids transformed me: Maybe you want to play the thing you're not." He's got two boys and a wife of nine years. Black plays Minecraft with his sons, ages six and eight, and lets them blast Die Antwoord and Kanye: "They know the words you can say in the car and the words you can say at school."

In Black's twenties, his acting hero was John Malkovich. "He seemed like the crazy guy from the desert. My other favourites were Christopher Walken, Gene Wilder – these people who seemed like they had a screw loose. For a long time I was just doing imitations of them." When Black found a more authentic voice, it came through comedy. "The marker I put in the sand is when I started writing and performing live with Tenacious D" – his loopy joke-rock duo with buddy Kyle Gass. *High Fidelity* and *School of Rock* made him a movie star, but a lead part in Peter Jackson's *King Kong* gave him reservations about being one – he's complained about the tedium of sitting around in trailers for hours. Smaller films followed; the best was *Bernie,* in which Black portrayed an adorable murderer. His ingenious performance earned a Golden Globe nomination but didn't fling open the prestige-picture floodgates as wide as he might have liked. "Not that many things come my way that are like, 'Holy crap, I have to do this'," says Black. "Paul Thomas Anderson's not calling me."

On the horizon are tentpoles like *Kung Fu Panda 3,* and smaller passion projects. In his spare time, Black collects rare coins. "I like the 1916 Standing Liberty quarter. When it was originally minted, she had an exposed breast, and you actually can gauge its quality by its definition." He's considered collecting fine art, too, but hasn't dived in. "I had an opportunity to buy a charcoal by Basquiat of Mr. T for a hundred grand." He let the chance pass. "It felt like he might be dissing Mr. T – he had this sad gold chain, no shoes, and I think Basquiat was saying, 'Look, this is your sad American dream for the African-American man.'" It turns out there are limits to Black's desire for art with a bitter aftertaste: "It was provocative, but it was also 'Don't you say that about my Mr. T!'"

FROM TOP: CHRISTOPHER POLK/GETTY IMAGES FOR SONY PICTURES ENTERTAINMENT; MERIE W. WALLACE/HBO


THE
DEAD
AFTER
JERRY



The shambling, strained afterlife – and improbable triumph – of the greatest jam band of them all

BY DAVID BROWNE

THE GOLDEN ROAD
From left: Garcia, Lesh, Weir, Kreutzmann and Hart (top) in San Francisco, 1968

Someone had to make the call, and as it often did, it fell to Jerry Garcia. It was July 1995, and the Grateful Dead were about to play the Deer Creek Music Center, outside Indianapolis, when an anonymous caller phoned the venue with a message: He was going to kill the Dead's iconic frontman. The caller had concluded that his daughter had run off with someone associated with the Dead and he was planning to take Garcia out during the show to exact revenge. It was bad enough that Garcia was struggling with health and drug issues. Now this? ◆ As the Dead huddled backstage with security and local police, no one knew how seriously to take the threat. Drummer Mickey Hart joked about it with Garcia; fearing for his safety, bassist Phil Lesh announced he had already packed his bags and was going back to the Bay Area with his family, who had joined him on the road. But the last word was Garcia's. Dismissing the threat, he told the band the show was on. Lesh and everyone else had no choice but to go along.

One month later, on August 9th, Garcia would be gone. After checking himself first into the Betty Ford Center for his heroin addiction, and then into Serenity Knolls, a woodsy retreat in Marin County, he was found dead in his room by a nurse, and his death was ruled a heart attack due to two severely clogged arteries. "He was being aggressive about cleaning up," guitarist Bob Weir told Rolling Stone in 2013, "and his body just couldn't handle it."

The band had already been through more than its share of crises: busts, business debacles, deaths in the family (keyboardists Ron "Pigpen" McKernan, Keith Godchaux and Brent Mydland). But with Garcia's passing, the Dead would lose the closest thing to a leader that the often dysfunctional organisation could bear. Never one to strong-arm his bandmates, Garcia would often let his wishes be known subtly, allowing everyone else to speak first in band meetings before weighing in himself. As Lesh told RS last year, "A lot of times he would lead by omission. Everybody would have an idea and he wouldn't like any of them. It was like, 'We're not going any of those ways. So figure it out.' It was anti-leadership."

Garcia's absence has defined the band ever since, as various combinations of the original members have come together – and come apart – in attempts to preserve the Grateful Dead's singular legacy. The result has been two decades of solo careers, offshoot bands, temporary retirements, full or partial reunions onstage and on tour, and occasional public squabbling, as dejected or puzzled Deadheads watched and tried to comprehend what was happening with their cherished band. "Jerry's death removed the centre," Lesh has said. "The bond wasn't as strong without him."

The bond will be restored in late June, when Weir, Lesh, Hart and drummer Bill Kreutzmann reunite for Fare Thee Well: five shows – two in Santa Clara, California, and three in Chicago, with Trey Anastasio of Phish standing in as singer-guitarist – that will celebrate the 50th anniversary of one of rock's most enduring institutions. The performances, some of which will also be shown in movie theatres around the country as well as streamed online and broadcast on pay-per-view, are among the most anticipated concerts of the year.

Arriving at this point was no easy task. Decades of tangled, often fraught relationships had to be managed, most delicately in the selection of the person who would be playing Garcia's parts onstage. The band is calling the shows its "final stand" – the last time the public will be able to see the four play together, and the end of a sometimes strained, haphazard chapter in the life of the Dead.

After Garcia's death, the band was "tired of being together", says a manager. "But I said, 'You have a company here.'"

In the immediate aftermath of Garcia's death, various ideas were floated for a post-Jerry tour: Carlos Santana and Los Lobos' David Hidalgo were rumoured as possible temporary replacements. At a meeting that December, Lesh and Kreutzmann retired from the road, and the name "Grateful Dead" was shelved as a touring entity. Grateful Dead Productions, the band's company, which employed 40-something staffers, took a predictable financial hit, despite the flood of merchandise orders from mourning Deadheads. Around 15 people were laid off – including members of the Dead's road crew – and others would face salary reductions. The band members "were kind of tired of being together", says their former business manager Tim Jorstad. "I was looking at them and saying, 'You have a company here, with merchandise and a record company – that's a real, live business that will carry on whether you guys release new music or not.'"

Kreutzmann wrestled with pills and alcohol abuse. "I was lost in every direction," he told RS in 2012. "I didn't know what to do." Hart formed a number of world-music-oriented bands, including Mystery Box. Weir's side project RatDog became his main gig – one that pointedly downplayed Dead songs in favour of blues, R&B and Bob Dylan covers. As Lesh told RS last year, "The Grateful Dead are not good mourners. Most of the time, the preferred response is to turn it into a joke. Me and Mickey at Jerry's coffin: 'Hey, he looks pretty good for a dead guy.' But nobody wants to go into the 'boo-hoo' mode."

Three years later, in 1998, Lesh, Weir and Hart joined together in a new band, dubbed the Other Ones in honour of the groundbreaking psychedelic suite on the Dead's *Anthem of the Sun*. Pianist Bruce Hornsby, who'd been a touring member of the Dead between 1990 and 1992, was part of the new band. Hornsby had left the Dead over his frustration with Garcia's increasingly erratic playing. But as the Other Ones began preparing for their summer tour, he saw the difference right away: Thanks to Lesh, the band was rehearsing more than usual, and with positive results. "The word got out that this was really good," says Hornsby. "Deadheads were



The Right Note
Bob Weir and Trey Anastasio performing at a benefit for Headcount at the Capitol Theatre on September 7th, 2012, in Port Chester, New York.

a discerning audience in that way. They knew good Dead and not-so-good Dead. It was so fresh."

Even when Garcia was alive, the personal dynamics within the Dead were complicated. Garcia could be both affable and demanding; Lesh was fastidious, especially when it came to their music and sound systems. Hart was the proactive, thousand-ideas-a-minute force of nature. Weir – who was all of 17 when the Dead played their first shows – was the perennial kid, still sometimes teased by his older bandmates, even after decades. Kreutzmann was the band's mercurial badass. They could be hard on one another: In August 1968, at a group meeting, the young Weir was told by Lesh and Garcia that he needed to improve his guitar playing, with the implied threat that he would be kicked out if he didn't.

New challenges created new divisions. In the late 1990s, Weir, Hart and Kreutzmann supported a plan to license their recordings and concert footage to a company funded by private investors. Lesh opposed the idea ("In essence, we were gambling with our legacy," he would write in his memoir, *Searching for the Sound*) but was outvoted – despite the Dead's tradition that big decisions could be vetoed by one member. Before matters grew too ugly, the dot-com crash put an end to the plans, but the damage had been done.

This was evident on nights such as December 31st, 2000, when Deadheads were presented with two different, opposing offshoots – a version of the Other Ones with Hart, Weir and Kreutzmann, and Lesh's Phil Lesh and Friends – both playing the same night in the Bay Area. By then, Lesh and Friends, a rotating ensemble that included at various times guitarists Warren Haynes and Derek Trucks and Little Feat keyboardist Bill Payne, had become the must-see of the post-Dead projects. "Promoters would call and say, 'I thought the Dead was Bobby and Jerry' – because they were the vocalists and guitarists – and 'Why is Phil selling 10 times what Bobby is selling?'" says a source in the Dead camp. "I said, 'Phil is the other great instrumentalist in the Dead, and that's what Deadheads care about.' And Phil and Friends were playing the repertoire."

In 2003 and 2004, they all came together to tour under the name the Dead. Tensions soon arose over who would call the musical shots. "It was a little bit of chaos that we went through," Weir told Rolling Stone of this period. "There were some misunderstandings." Added Kreutzmann, "It was kind of rough. I can't be in a band when people are fighting with each other and having a hard time."

Questions over how to manage the band's legacy in the digital age emerged. Since the Nineties, Deadheads had begun uploading fan-recorded concert tapes to the Live Music Archive, a San Francisco website, making virtually every show the band had ever played available for free. But now, the band that had fostered this taper culture wasn't playing stadiums anymore, and it needed revenue. "The Dead were caught in a difficult place," said a source close to the group. "The market ethic of the band was always to give performances away. It worked as long as there were infinite shows. When Jerry died, all that music became their financial future. So now it was 'Maybe we can't give this away.'"

In 2005, the Dead ordered the tapes pulled down. Lesh openly defied the decision, saying in a statement that he hadn't been told of the plan. After an online petition was circulated by angry fans, the Dead organisation came up with a compromise, allowing audience tapes to be available for free download – but not the band's higher-quality soundboard tapes, which would only be available for streaming. "You go through 30 years together, you have ups and downs," Lesh told RS last year. "I love my brothers. But just like in any family, you don't always agree with what they do."

Tensions eased the following year when the group signed a lucrative deal with Rhino Entertainment, which gave each man a guaranteed yearly income for a decade, no matter how many CDs or downloads were sold. The Dead reunited to play a Barack Obama benefit in October 2008. Inspired by that show, and with the backing of Live Nation, the band returned to the road in the spring of 2009. "We've all been bandleaders now," Weir said at the time, "so it's easier to be an Indian and not a chief. That's a real positive element."

But after a strong beginning, the tour ended on a less-than-friendly note a month later, with lingering resentments

Contributing editor **DAVID BROWNE**'s new book, *So Many Roads: The Life and Times of the Grateful Dead* (Da Capo), is out now.

OPENING SPREAD: MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES. THIS PAGE: TAYLOR HILL/FILMMAGIC

and money matters coming between them, according to various sources. Backstage at one show, Hart looked over a long set list that he thought the meticulous Lesh had prepared, and cracked, "Yeah, that's not going to happen. This is nuts. Phil's dreaming if he thinks we can play that." In his memoir, *Deal*, Kreutzmann says the tour "spelled the end of the Dead" thanks to "head trips…so monstrous and so big". Said Hart to Rolling Stone, "There were a lot of personal and musical issues." According to one source, Weir still felt as if he were being treated as the "little brother". It was as if the band dynamic was frozen in time.

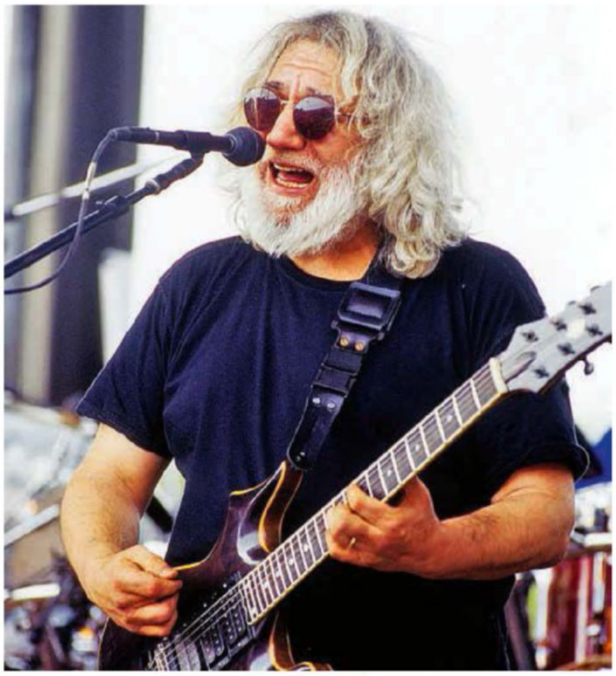
Lesh and Weir, however, reconnected. "Phil and I rediscovered each other on the Dead tour," Weir said. Over dinner with their wives soon after, Lesh and Weir discussed joining forces to form a band of their own, which came to be called Furthur, after Ken Kesey's famous Merry Pranksters bus. They recruited guitarist John Kadlecik, who played and sang Garcia's parts in the much-loved Dead cover band Dark Star Orchestra. "There were musical directions Phil and I were sort of boldly pursuing," added Weir, "and I'm not entirely sure the other guys heard it."

Lesh embraced Kadlecik, who had grown up in the Midwest and had first seen the Dead in 1989. "It's a little spooky in some ways because he's internalised the essence of Jerry's approach," said Lesh about Kadlecik in 2010. "His voice can be very similar to Jerry's. Every so often, he'll sing something in a certain way, and it's just like déjà vu. I love that. It's been a *long* 15 years."

Possibly because of the fallout from the 2009 reunion tour, Kreutzmann and Hart weren't invited to be part of Furthur, but it's unlikely they would have accepted the invitation anyway. Kreutzmann thought it was in bad taste to hire a former Dead tribute-band member. In his memoir, he wrote, "Playing Grateful Dead music with a fake Jerry just seems disrespectful to me."

"They've always had these periods of disaffection and periods of reconciliation," says Gary Lambert, a former Grateful Dead Productions employee who now co-hosts *Tales From the Golden Road* on SiriusXM. "And they manage to work through all of it." Sure enough, in late 2011, Weir and Hart popped into a San Francisco club show to sit in with Kreutzmann's band 7 Walkers. A few months later, Hart sat in his tour bus in Manhattan, preparing for a show with his own band. He was talking to Rolling Stone about new plans for Dead merchandise and movies, but inevitably the topic of the state of the band came up. "Maybe time will heal a lot of the bad feelings we felt during that [2009] tour," he said, twirling his drumsticks in the air. "As long as we're above ground, anything is possible."

In his New York office, promoter Peter Shapiro, looking like the younger, less-angst-wracked brother of comic Richard Lewis, grabs his iPhone and proudly shows off a message from Weir, Hart, Kreutzmann and Lesh that will soon be read on satellite radio: "None of us anticipated the overwhelming outpouring of love and interest following our initial announcement of the shows at [Chicago's] Soldier Field, and we were blown away by the response," reads the message in part, signed by all four men.



Leading By Omission
Garcia performing one of his last shows with the Grateful Dead at the Sam Boyd Stadium in Las Vegas on May 21st, 1995, two months before his death.

With the Dead's five-decade anniversary looming, the question wasn't whether or not the band should commemorate it, but who would be able to pull it together. The potential profits weren't lost on anyone: At least one major rock manager reached out to the band, and various ideas were floating around, from a slot at Bonnaroo to having each man play with his current solo band at a festival.

It was Shapiro – a Deadhead who caught his first show in 1992 and went on to run the well-regarded jam-band club Wetlands in New York – who won out. Ten years ago, Shapiro sent a letter to the band trying to organise a 40th-anniversary show at Madison Square Garden. He received no response from the Dead's management back then, but now, times – and connections – had changed. In 2012, Shapiro reopened the old-school Capitol Theatre in Port Chester, New York, where the Dead had played memorable shows in the Seventies. Weir had played at one of the theatre's opening nights, and Lesh had signed up for a residency there.

Reuniting the Core Four wouldn't be easy. Furthur had recently dissolved, a year and a half after an incident at a 2013 show where Weir collapsed onstage, perhaps the result of issues the guitarist had with painkillers for a bad shoulder. Last year, Lesh characterised his relationship with Kreutzmann and Hart as "distant but cordial.... I don't see them at all."

All four live not far from one another, but have separate lives: Lesh has carved out a cosy musical existence near his home in Marin County, having converted a former seafood joint in San Rafael into Terrapin Crossroads, a barnlike club and restaurant, where he plays regularly. ("Even if I have four shows and a day off and four more shows, it's doable because it's close to home," he said last year.) Hart lives in a sprawling compound in Sonoma County, decorated with gardens, and including a home studio that features a candid shot of the drummer with Garcia. Weir has stayed put in the same idiosyncratic hilltop house in Mill Valley for decades, stocked with Garcia memorabilia, including one of Jerry's banjos and a Garcia bobblehead doll.

Kreutzmann recently moved back to California after years living on an organic farm on the Big Island in Hawaii. In the months before, word began circulating that his memoir, which was due to be published in May 2015, would include some of the drummer's unvarnished opinions of his bandmates. The book takes small but pointed digs at Lesh's and Weir's songwriting, Lesh's voice and Hart's hiatus from the Dead in the 1970s. (Weir, for his part, says he hasn't read it, because he wants to write his own book someday.)

Yet the door remained open, if only by a crack. Weir told RS in 2014, "We have to do something commemorative. I think we owe it to the fans, we owe it to the songs, we owe it to ourselves. If there are issues we have to get past, I think that we owe it to ourselves to man up and get past them. If there are hatchets to be buried, then let's get to work. Let's start digging." According to Justin Kreutzmann, Bill's son, "The

LARRY HULST/MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

general consensus around Dead people was, 'We should do something.'"

When Lesh's first grandchild arrived last year, Kreutzmann sent his former bandmate a warm e-mail, says one source; Weir, Hart and Kreutzmann also convened for a meeting in Marin County. "It was a process," Shapiro says diplomatically. When asked to elaborate, Shapiro puts his head down for a while, pauses, and is careful with his response; no one wants to upset this delicate apple cart. "They each wanted to do it in their own way with their own vision. We had to get to a place where it all came together."

Next year, the Dead will be the subject of a new documentary directed by Amir Bar-Lev, with the support of Martin Scorsese. (One of many highlights that will make Deadheads drool in anticipation: never-before-seen live and backstage footage from the band's 1970 trip to Europe, including scenes of Garcia walking the band through "Candyman" before it was recorded for *American Beauty*.) Reunion negotiations were so hush-hush that Bar-Lev, who was filming his documentary during this time, didn't hear one word about any plans. "They kept a pretty tight lid on it," says Bar-Lev. "We were around them the whole time, and nobody said anything to me."

One thing that was never seriously discussed: a full-on Dead tour. Lesh had recently said he was "off the bus – I'm not going to be doing any tours per se". He elaborated on that to Rolling Stone in early 2014: "Touring and travelling, one-nighters, that's productive in a way, but it's spiritually deadening. And I came to the realisation that at this point in my life, there wasn't enough time left for me to be riding on a bus or sitting in a hotel room. It's hours I'm not being productive in some way. It's hours I'm not spending with my family."

Shapiro says that choosing Chicago was a collective decision. "We had one shot – let's do it in the middle of the country, and everyone can come," he says. "And it was the last place they played." The reunion was on.

On a Friday night this May, Lesh and one of the latest incarnations of his Friends band were playing at his club Terrapin Crossroads, when a surprise guest popped onstage: Trey Anastasio. Joining the band, which included one of Lesh's sons, Anastasio played two Dead standards – Garcia and lyricist Robert Hunter's "Bertha" and the traditional "Goin' Down the Road Feeling Bad". On the latter, Anastasio peeled off a solo that hinted at Garcia's piercing style while adhering to his own sensibility.

To get to this moment, the band had to confront perhaps the biggest question of the reunion: Who would fill Garcia's shoes onstage? Past players, like Haynes or Jimmy Herring of Widespread Panic, seemed more closely aligned with one Dead member than others; Kreutzmann's comments about Kadlecik appeared to rule out his participation. One person everyone could agree on was Anastasio, the Phish singer-guitarist who has played onstage with both Weir and Lesh. Anastasio exudes some of Garcia's friendly-Buddha vibe and, just as important, is like Switzerland: a player with no bad baggage. "They're all very comfortable with Trey," says Shapiro. "Musically and as a person. He's easy."

"He's the guy," says Weir of Anastasio. "There are a couple of other guitarists who might be able to handle that load, and one of the guitarists we considered is real good but doesn't sing. Trey really does the whole thing." Anastasio is also a star in his own right, someone who clearly would help fill seats.

"Everybody would have an idea, and Jerry wouldn't like any of them, so he'd say, 'Go figure it out.' It was anti-leadership."

After some negotiations between Shapiro and Trey's manager Coran Capshaw, Anastasio received the final offer around New Year's, in an e-mail from Lesh. "He talked a lot about the healthy relationship, the respect between the band members right now, that he thought it was going to be a real positive experience," says Anastasio. That's unlike two years ago, when Anastasio sat in with Furthur at the Lockn' Festival, and the Phish guitarist sensed problems in the Dead world. "There was definitely some squeak in the wheels between the band members," he says. This time, however, Lesh "wrote that he thought that was all ironed over, and that I could rest assured that it was going to be a good experience".

In a telling sign, Lesh also wrote, "This is the last time I'm doing this." As Anastasio says, "He seemed pretty definitive about that. He wants to put some closure. That's what I'm interpreting."

When the Chicago shows went on sale in January, some were sceptical the band could sell more than 200,000 tickets. When the Dead last toured together, in 2009, sales were strong in some markets and not in others. "I said, 'A stadium? Are they going to be able to sell that many tickets?'" recalls Justin Kreutzmann, who is overseeing all the video aspects of the shows. "And somebody said, 'That's not going to be a problem.'" Millions of ticket requests came in, and the office of Grateful Dead Ticket Sales in the tiny Marin County coastal town of Stinson Beach was inundated with more than 60,000 hand-decorated envelopes (a long-standing Deadhead tradition).

Anastasio has been a focal point for rehearsals, meeting with the members individually to jam. (He's also bought some new effects pedals to help him achieve a Garcia-like guitar tone.) As of early May, he had spent time at Lesh's house, and the two men secretly rehearsed with Weir on the afternoon of May 1st at Terrapin Crossroads, before the club opened. Kreutzmann is said to be exercising daily. Weir, still recovering from shoulder surgery, is practicing blindfolded so he won't look at his left hand and strain his neck. "I have to realign myself and my posture to play the instrument," he says. "It'll have a pretty big payoff if I can do it."

The entire band, which will be joined by Hornsby and longtime post-Garcia collaborator Jeff Chimenti on keyboards, won't rehearse together until mid-June, shortly before the Santa Clara performances. Current plans call for two two-hour sets at each show. Garcia's lead vocals will be split among Hornsby, Weir and Anastasio.

Once the last note of the final night at Chicago fades, the Dead will return to what they've been doing since Garcia died: carving out lives and music of their own, with and without one another. Lesh is planning shows with Phil Lesh and Friends, and Weir, Kreutzmann and Hart are rumoured to be joining up with John Mayer for a tour that may try to extend the celebratory vibe of Fare Thee Well. (Even Shapiro knows that additional shows by the foursome after Chicago "would be bad", coming after the farewell announcement.)

Weir, for his part, is still "a little bit surprised" that the reunion is actually happening. "But I'm happy," he says. "The guys have gotten over their differences and risen to the occasion. Because we owe it to ourselves, every bit as much as we owe the fans who kept us off the streets for 50 years. We owe each other a debt of gratitude."

Some things haven't changed, though: "It's going to be a work in progress until we walk off the stage that last night in July," says Weir. "Just like always."

Additional reporting by David Fricke



How did Ronda Rousey go from living in her car to being MMA's most unstoppable force?

By Erik Hedegaard

Photograph by Peggy Sirota

The World's Most Dangerous Woman



Rousey at Muscle Beach in Los Angeles

Ronda Rousey is peacefully asleep

inside her wee Venice Beach, California, bungalow, her breathing rhythmic, only one of her feet stirring. She's naked, because that's how she sleeps, not much of a threat to anyone and so unlike how she is when she's in the Ultimate Fighting Championship's Octagon. At times like those, she's a broad-shouldered, evil-eyed fighting fury, capable of wicked overhand rights, various elbow strikes, thudding head punches, an entire panoply of judo throws, mounts, tosses and sweeps, and, of course, her signature fight-ending killer move, the armbar submission.

Not that the world has gotten a chance to see all of this mayhem yet. Her fights, three amateur and 11 pro, with not a single loss among them, tend to end in less than 60 seconds. At the age of 28, she has in four years become the most dominant mixed-martial-arts fighter in the sport's history and was in fact recently named "the most dominant athlete alive", beating out names like LeBron and Mayweather. On the fight scene, there's never, ever really been anyone quite like her. "She's a beast, man," says UFC president Dana White. "She's the greatest athlete I've ever worked with. With her, it's like the Tyson era, like, how fast is she gonna destroy somebody, and in what manner? Ronda's one in a million."

Up in her bedroom, inside her bungalow, at a few minutes before nine, Rousey's right foot has begun to stir a little more, maybe even twitch a few times. She's alone there, no one to bother her, but she still needs to sleep. Her next fight, in August against Bethe Correia, is not that far off. She has to train, loves to train, never wants to stop training. Plus, whereas five years ago, after taking time off from her early career as a bronze-medal-winning Olympic judoka, she was a booze-swilling, pot-smoking cocktail waitress who was so hard up for cash that she lived out of her cheapo Honda Accord for a spell, she now has her days filled with all kinds of celebrity-type obligations, interviews, photo shoots and various calls from movie people.

Her right foot is jerking around, and her eyelids begin to flutter. The alarm clock next to her is set to go off at nine.

It is now one minute until, and suddenly, in bed, her eyes pop open. Silence surrounds her. She looks at her clock, and all she can think is "Yes! Yeah!" By way of explanation, an hour later – after she's thrown on an old Misfits T-shirt and sweatpants, slurped down a chia-bowl breakfast ("I love the bowl! I crave it!"), said good morning to her big-galoot Argentinian mastiff, Mochi, wandered around her messy, clothing-cluttered living room, looking for stuff to throw in her backpack, and at no time giving any thought whatsoever to putting on makeup – she says to a visiting reporter, "See, for some reason, I feel like it's a victory if I wake up one minute before the alarm. It's like I'm in a contest with myself, with my foot kicking around until it wakes up the rest of my body. It's the stupidest thing. But it makes me feel like I've already won something."

And so this is how she lives, all day, every day, 24 hours a day, for days and days on end. It's all about winning, in any way that she can.

> **"I go from the most dangerous woman to the most cuddly, happy thing."**



UNTIL ROUSEY, THE UFC didn't even have a women's division. The very idea of two girls going at it made White uncomfortable. "I don't want to see two women beatin' on each other," he told *Time* in 2007.

Back then, the most desirable place for MMA women was in a much smaller organisation called Strikeforce. It's where all the early great pros fought, including Gina Carano, who retired to go into movies, and Cristiane "Cyborg" Santos, who would later be stripped of her championship title for a steroid violation, and where Rousey first came on the scene, in 2011.

At the time, Rousey had an amateur MMA record of 3-0, her wins accomplished in less than two minutes total. After two equally quick victories in Strikeforce, she was given the chance to take on bantamweight titleholder Miesha Tate. This led to a nasty rivalry that continues to this day. Rousey wrote Tate off thusly: "I don't have respect for Miesha's inconsistency. One minute it's about the sport, the next she is wearing booty shorts." And later snorting, "I'm gonna talk a bunch of shit. And I'm gonna break a couple of girls' arms, and I'm not gonna feel the least bit sorry about it."

This got her lots of bad press, but in their early 2012 contest, she backed up her words. At 4:27 in the first round, she hyperextended Tate's elbow with an armbar, ripping through ligaments and forcing her to tap out. Strikeforce later labelled it the Submission of the Year.

Like everyone else, however, it wasn't just Rousey's fight skills that caught White's attention. "She's beautiful, intelligent and very pro-women, which I respect," he says. "And she is psychotically competitive." Which is true. Take the book tour for her new autobiography, *My Fight/Your Fight*. She'd been dreading it, until she read some report about Kim Kardashian's crazy new book tour and suddenly changed her mind: "I was like, 'Hell, no! I need mine to be crazier than that! Mine's going to be the best book tour that ever happened! Kim Kardashian, I will beat your book tour!'"

In this, as in all things, she will not fail, because she cannot fail, and she cannot fail because she's a winner. It's an unassailable logic that was first drilled into her by her mum, AnnMaria De Mars, herself a former judo champion, who, if she saw her teenage daughter relaxing in bed, say, would jump on her and attempt to get her in an armbar, the message being: Never let your guard down.

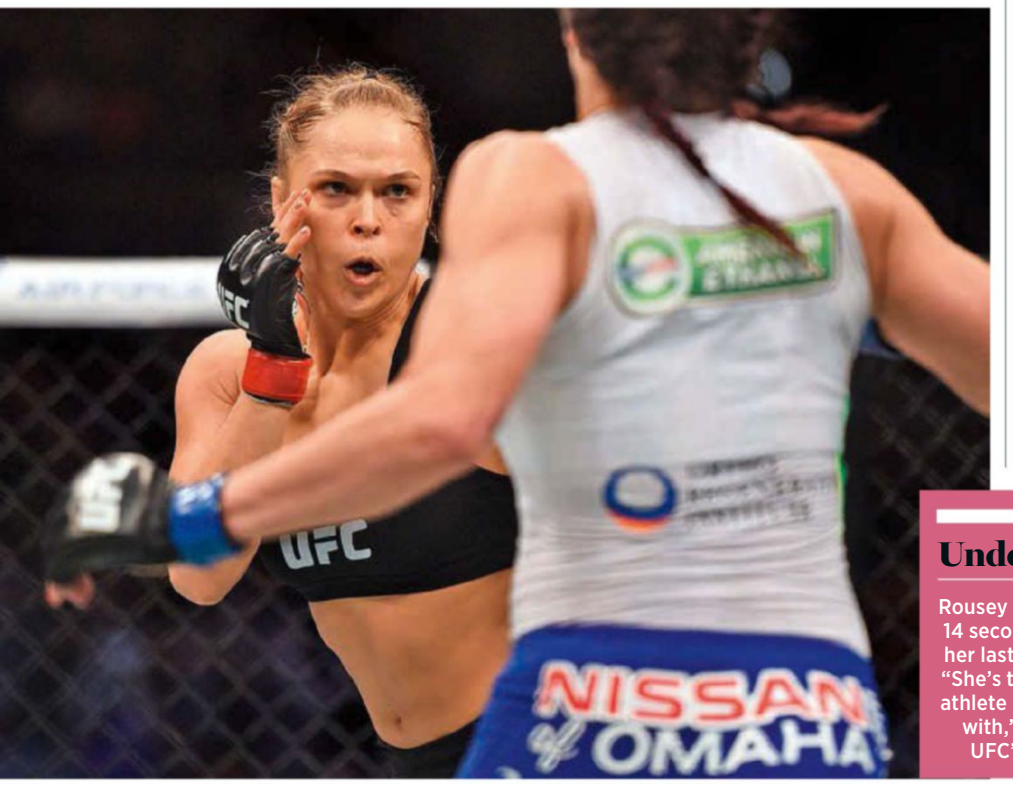
All these things made Rousey the kind of complete package and talent that convinced White and the UFC that women at a fight could be more than card-girl eye candy. In late 2012, he announced the formation of a women's division, installing Rousey as its bantamweight champion. Her record now stands at 5-0. Most recently, she took on Cat Zingano, a match that ended with an armbar in 14 seconds, making it the fastest title fight in the UFC's 21-year history. Rousey reportedly got $130,000 for the win, after which she renegotiated her contract for an undisclosed but presumably far grander amount and one better suited to her new role as the UFC's biggest star.

Along the way, the only fighter to get past the first round with Rousey in the UFC has been Tate, who during their 2013 rematch managed to make it to the third round before once again finding herself on the mat, with Rousey bending her elbow back against the joint until she tapped out rather than have it broken. It was anoth-

Contributing editor ERIK HEDEGAARD *profiled Marilyn Manson in RS 760.*

er winning armbar. Afterward, she offered her hand to Rousey, but Rousey refused to shake it. The blood between them was that bad, a situation that had been compounded when they faced off as opposing coaches on Fox Sports' UFC reality show *The Ultimate Fighter,* with Rousey constantly giving Tate the finger and snarling stuff like, "Fuck you, bitch!" The end result of all this has been to turn Rousey into what the pro-wrestling world calls a heel, the fighter everyone loves to hate. Rousey's response has always been, "I like it that way."

"There are certain things I admire about her as an athlete and a fighter," says Tate, "but I don't respect her as a person. There's an ugly side to her. Yeah, she's just nasty."



Undefeated

Rousey needed just 14 seconds to beat her last opponent. "She's the greatest athlete I've worked with," says the UFC's White.

Zipping along the highway in her messy white Range Rover toward her gym today, the hard-case Rousey is not exactly the one on display. She's laughing loudly and talking about her 2013 fight with Liz Carmouche and how at one point, her bra nearly got tugged aside. "I have a weigh-in bra that's smaller and lighter and I'm a girl, so it's cuter, too, and I wanna look cute," she says. "But on fight night, who cares about looking cute? It needs to be effective, only on that particular fight night, I didn't have an effective bra. I just had two cute bras, so I had to wear one of them." She laughs again, thinking about what could have happened had some quick rearranging during the fight gone wrong. "At one point, I was perilously close to showing everyone my nipples, so the second I got her off my back, my mind shifted to 'Cover yourself up, girl!' And when Liz saw that, she kicked me right in the chest. Which she was entirely right to do. I would have done it if I was her."

And then there are the shorts the girls wear, just the way they ride up. "The first Miesha fight, she got her hooks in from behind, and I was like, 'Oh, I can get out of here easy.' But if I did, I would flash everyone, so I had to figure out a way to pull her feet out where my business was facing down, not facing the world." She giggles. "And then I have a phobia about camel toe. I swear to God, every time after I win, even before I take my mouth guard out, I pull my shorts down, and it's because I have a phobia of high-def camel toe, people zooming in on the Internet and everything. It's always, first thing, fix the camel toe!"

Such problems. The guys don't have such problems. Good thing Rousey says Reebok is working with her on an anti-camel-toe design.

Regarding makeup, there's a number of reasons why she doesn't wear it. Firstly, her mum never wore it, and until recently, what with her media appearances and all, she thought it was stupid too. Also, she says, "I don't feel the need to be the hot chick every second of the day." And finally, she says, "I like to be able to surprise people when I turn it on. I want it to be like the movie *She's All That,* when they unveil her. I mean, if you try all the time, there's no unveiling: The veil has already dropped, and that's who the fuck you are, and I still want the veil." She pauses, gooses the gas, switches lanes with hardly a look. "And, you know, being hard to figure out helps keep people interested."

And yet, after a while, hanging out with her, she eventually returns to form and starts happily bashing her opponents, past, future and potential. On Correia, her upcoming challenger in UFC 190, which figures to be a rout, with Vegas bookmakers making Rousey the 1250 favourite (i.e., a $1,250 successful bet gets you only $100 in winnings): "She started talking shit about how I look, like, 'I'm gonna do her a favour and punch that wart off her face.' I'm like, 'A, it's a beauty mark – go ask Cindy Crawford about that.' And B, she's dumb." On Tate: "She's dumb too. She's made a whole career out of getting her ass kicked by me."

When she gets going like this, it's almost like she can't help it, like the way her foot twitches unbidden to wake her up in the morning and beat the alarm. It's just the way she is. She has no regrets about it, either. "I don't believe too much in regretting shit," she says. "It's a very wasteful use of energy." In her eyes, all these things she says about the other girls, they should weep with gratitude. "This chick I'm fighting next will never know how many things I've done for her to make sure I could personally kick her ass and people would be entertained by it. See, you let the plant grow and then you fuck the plant up. If only they knew how much I do for them."

She pulls into a Starbucks, runs inside, grabs iced coffees for herself and her trainer, darts back to her car, hops inside, and off she goes again.

"I like quoting *Lord of the Rings,*" she says along the way. "'My list of allies grows thin! My list of enemies grows long!'" And, brother, does she ever seem pleased.

How she got this way, she can't really say, but maybe it has something to do with the circumstances of her birth and upbringing. In her first six years, nobody knew whether she'd ever speak an intelligent sentence, such were the aftereffects of being born with an umbilical cord wrapped around her neck. It could be that her gibberish and mumblings were signs of brain damage. No one knew, and her parents – Ron, an aerospace-industry executive, and De Mars, an educational psychologist and statistician – moved when she was three from Riverside, California, to Jamestown, North Dakota, in part to be near the Minot State University speech therapists, who set about bringing her vocal cords to their senses. It wasn't easy, and it took time.

OPENING SPREAD: STYLING BY DEBORAH WAKNIN AT BRYAN BANTRY INC. HAIR AND MAKEUP BY JOHNNY HERNANDEZ. BODYSUIT BY MINIMALE ANIMALE. JEFF BOTTARI/ZUFFA LLC/GETTY IMAGES

And it was especially frustrating for Ronda given how advanced her sisters were. "I'm dumb, Mum," she once said. "Maria and Jennifer have the words. I don't have the words." "No, you're not, you're very smart," her mother told her. Which, later on in high school, proved to be true, especially in nonverbal areas of study like math, science and art, where she excelled.

She was a daddy's girl, loved fishing with her dad and learned how to hunt at his knee. When Ronda was four, however, he broke his back in a sledding accident, which was complicated by a rare blood disorder that prevented his injuries from healing. Four years later, he committed suicide rather than put his family through what doctors told him would be a painful and inevitable decline.

"He was gone," says Rousey, "and we slowly got used to it. Athletics were the thing that I had, yeah, and, um, I'm still doing that."

The family returned to California and settled in Santa Monica, where De Mars worked three jobs to support her kids, which now included yet another daughter, Julia. The kids all had to give judo a try – in 1984, De Mars was the first American ever to win at the World Judo Championships, so she had certain expectations – but Ronda was the only one to keep at it. And she did so, monomaniacally. In school, she didn't go to a single party or dance and never went out on a date. All she did in her spare time was train. By age 16, she was so thickly muscled that the other kids called her Savage or Miss Man. They'd grab at her arms and yell, "Flex, flex, flex!" – so humiliating her that she started wearing a long-sleeve hoodie year-round. "Eighty-five degrees out, I wouldn't take it off," she says. "I wouldn't let anybody see my arms." Even today, when most fighters flex their muscles during weigh-ins, she rarely does, keeping them to her side instead, or curling them behind her back.

Her ears, too, were a problem. They'd get pulpy and swollen after a fight; one ear had to be cut open and drained, Ronda just wanted to go home, but her mum – who was as hard on Ronda as Ronda was on herself – made her train instead, and the drained ear bled all over the place, leaving it permanently cauliflowered and another source of embarrassment at school.

Then again, those arms did have their uses. When she was 14, she and her friend Jackie would go down to the Third Street Promenade, where Jackie acted as her Don King, sidling up to delinquent toughs and saying, "I bet my friend can beat you up for $10." They'd all then retire to a park, where Ronda would take the hapless kid down in a chokehold or armbar, relieve him of his money, split the proceeds with her friend and go buy a couple of Frappuccinos.

During her sophomore year, she dropped out to concentrate on judo. One day, her mum sat her down for a talk. The Olympic trials were coming up. "If you don't want to go to the Olympics," her mum said, "I have no problem telling everyone to go fuck themselves." "No, this is what I want to do," Ronda said. "OK," her mum said, "because if you want to be top in the world, it's going to take a lot of gut-wrenching, balls-to-the-wall work, and that's it." Undeterred, at the age of 17, Ronda became the youngest judoka in the world to qualify for the 2004 Olympics in Athens.

It was not a pleasant experience. For one thing, she became bulimic while constantly struggling to make her weight class. Nor was she really allowed to vent any of her feelings or frustrations. At the time, she hadn't perfected her trash-talking skill set. Her mum, during her competing years, used to push opponents and say stuff like, "Bitch, I'm going to break your fucking arm today." But that was before women's judo was introduced to the Olympics, where such talk is not tolerated, and until entering MMA, Ronda had to stifle herself and just carry on. Or cry, which she did often. In fact, almost every time she made even the slightest mistake in a practice session, or lost a fight, or came close to losing a fight, or sometimes even when she won a fight, she would break down in tears, an uncomfortable but uncontrollable reaction that has never gone away. It used to humiliate her, but she's come to accept it as just one of those things left over from her early, nonspeaking years, when, she says, "crying was the only way I could tell people I was upset". No matter what, though, she has always refused to submit in a fight, even if it meant her elbow would get broken. "Anytime anyone ever got me in an armbar, I'm like, 'Well, I guess it's going.' Yeah. I never tapped out in judo."

"I fall in love with everybody, even the person I just beat."



Four years after Athens came her big win at the Beijing Olympics. She was unhappy that it was only for a bronze medal, however, even though it made her the first American woman judoka to ever even place in the Games. Shortly thereafter, she went into a tailspin and quit her sport. She just didn't want to fight anymore. It pissed her off to no end that, after all her hard work, her only reward from the U.S. Olympic Committee was "10 grand and a handshake". She spent the next year living like lots of regular people do. She worked at a bar. She held down the graveyard shift at a 24 Hour Fitness. Drank, smoked weed, caroused, lived in her Honda for a while, went out with another guy who was just plain bad, and put up with her mum, who called every guy she dated Bob, even to their face, never bothering to learn their real names, since they were all jerks and wouldn't be around for long, so why should she bother?

Eventually, she decided to give professional MMA a shot, which turned out to be exactly the thing to do. "Right now, I'm the baddest chick on the planet," she says. "And no matter what else happens to me, I have that. If I don't, I'm just a loser and I'm back in 2008, a drunk bartender living off of french fries and smoking menthols. And no one wants to smoke menthols. Menthols are disgusting."

Inside the Glendale Fighting Club, Rousey's head trainer, Edmond Tarverdyan, the club's wiry, smooth-tempered owner and a champion Muay Thai fighter from Armenia who has been working with Rousey since 2010, is out on the floor holding up a pair of mitts. Rousey stands facing him, feet planted, head down, gloved hands up. On the walls surrounding her are posters from her fights. On another wall, De Mars, who continues to give her daughter advice ("If she wants to take it, fine, and if she doesn't, she doesn't"), has in large letters scrawled some of her sayings, or "mum-isms", as Rousey calls them: "Winning is a habit." "Nobody's easy until after you beat them."

"We did a lot of straight shots, now we need to do angles," Tarverdyan tells Rousey. She nods, strikes.

"Beautiful," he says. "All right, great. Stay in place. No extra. That's good. OK, now, your right hand. Yeah, feel the shadow. Go jab and then go. OK, now you're out there, you're not afraid, you were never afraid. Beautiful, look at that!"

This dance goes on for almost an hour, with Rousey trying to do everything Tarverdyan asks, her eyes following him with nearly solicitous affection.

When the session is over, he says, "She's a born fighter. Here, we feel bad for her sparring partners. She knocks everybody out, so we hire female world boxing champions because they can take the punishment."

Rousey is nodding and beaming. Their relationship is oddly intimate. Every day, when Rousey buys him an iced coffee, she takes a straw and removes the paper up to the tip before inserting it into the cup. "Edmond's little straw," she will say. "I know there's extra love on that straw, even if he never notices it and never will." For his part, when Rousey was poor, Tarverdyan

would order a ton of food at restaurants, telling her it was the Armenian way, just so she could get it to go at the end, never knowing it was his gift to her.

"The master plan is to retire undefeated," she says, "and walk away and not have anything left to prove. It'll be hard to know when it's time, but it'll help to have something else to get into, which is why I'm putting time into acting and the book and buying properties."

"I'll know when it's time," says Tarverdyan.

"Yeah," says Rousey. "I trust you. I only have so much ring time that my body can endure. I've had four surgeries on my knees, arthritis in my neck, separated my shoulders, broken my nose. I'm just gonna hope that science advances faster than I can deteriorate. Because what am I gonna do? Put a perfect body into the ground? What's the point of that?"

A while later, she's telling what it's like for her right after winning a fight and she's in the shower. "I start to giggle my ass off," she says. "It's my first time alone. And for some reason, right then in the shower, it takes over, how happy I am, and I laugh my ass off. I mean, when was the last time you laughed like that at nothing that was funny?" She pauses. "I need to feel pressure. I need to feel like winning is the biggest deal in the fucking universe. I wouldn't do as well without people watching. I'd still win. But I wouldn't do it with such pizazz."

Pizazz?

"Yeah, that's it. I fight with pizazz. It's a different sound from everyone else. It's the sound of pizazz."





Olympian

Above: Rousey throwing her mother, AnnMaria De Mars, a judo champion in her own right, in 2001. Right: Rousey won the bronze in 2008, but afterward quit the sport and fell into a depression before taking up MMA.

FROM TOP: COURTESY OF RONDA ROUSEY; TOSHIFUMI KITAMURA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Later in the afternoon, on the way home, Rousey says, "I think it's funny when people think that because I'm a female athlete that I must be a lesbian, and I'm like, 'No, I love men so much that I beat the fuck out of girls for a living just to take them all out.'" She's joking, of course, but at the moment, she doesn't have a boyfriend. There are various reasons for that, though. For one, she's too busy. For another, she says, "the kind of guys I'm into have lots of desirable women willing to do backflips for them – and, I mean, if you can look like a man standing next to me, then you're a real fucking man – but I'm just not doing any backflips."

And then there's the third and biggest reason. Rousey isn't scared of much, but she is scared of men she likes.

"This one guy, he's pretty well-known, he keeps texting me to go do this or that, and I'm such a pussy, I won't say yes. And I want to. But I just pussy out. And then I met this guy at a gas station the other day – we had a moment with our credit cards not working right – and he asked me out. He was cute, but I was just a big ol' pussy. I was like, 'I don't know. I gotta lot of shit, bro.' I bro'd him, and I didn't want to." She sighs. "I don't know what my problem is, and why I get so shy that I have trouble speaking, when I'm so bold in other areas. I have an actual issue, I do believe."

Rousey really is complex, maybe even bordering on an amusingly appealing weirdo. She suffers from constant nightmares about zombie attacks. Is "deathly ticklish. I will turn into a fucking ninja if you try to tickle me." Steals spoons from restaurants and in so doing is overjoyed. Worries what you will think if you look closely at the panties on the floor in her place, as in, "He probably thinks I got raped by Wolverine last night because my dog munches on the crotch of all my underwear, and they have teeth marks in them and, like, yeah, I don't have a weird fetish or stainless-steel anything going on down there."

She pulls over into the passing lane, where a car already is, and when that driver honks, she yells, "What are you honking at? You're the one that's an asshole!"

Rousey says she doesn't care about not having a boyfriend. "If it's just about sex, I could get laid any old time. It's not about that. It's not like I have this fleeting window of time where I can have a sex life, whereas I do have this fleeting window of time where I can accomplish all these other things. If anything, it'll be better for my sex life if I get all this other shit done, because I'll be more durable afterward."

Back inside her place, she greets Mochi, then takes a request and goes to stand in front of a full-length mirror to display the face she puts on during every fight right before the referee claps his hands and bellows, "Let's get it on!" Her fight face. "I call it mean mugging," she says, dropping into it, almost shyly. "You're staring at your opponent through your eyebrows."

She backs away from the mirror and says people who think she's impassive at such moments have it wrong. "I'm not looking blankly," she says. "You have to have intent, because people can read what you're thinking, and so I'm thinking of all the things I'm gonna do. Like with Cat Zingano. She's a sweet girl, super-awesome chick. But every single time I looked at her, I thought, 'I'm gonna send her home unrecognisable to her own child.' My mind just goes there. To terrible things. But then when the fight's over, I go from the most dangerous woman on the planet to the most cuddly, happy thing ever. I fall in love with everybody, even the person I just beat. I love that person for giving me that moment. I'll never hate them for wanting the same thing I do. I love them for it. Because I need them in order to be able to do what I do for myself."

But then, of course, there's always the next fight and the next opponent to hate, and hate them she will, because that's how she wins, and she will do anything to win. "I love heights, love bugs, loved to dig up earthworms, like snakes and slimy things, jumping off things, fire," she says. "I'm fine with all of it, always thought I'd be great on *Fear Factor*, because I'd eat that goat dick just like that. It's the thought of failing. That is my one and only big fear."

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Tame Impala's Singular Vision

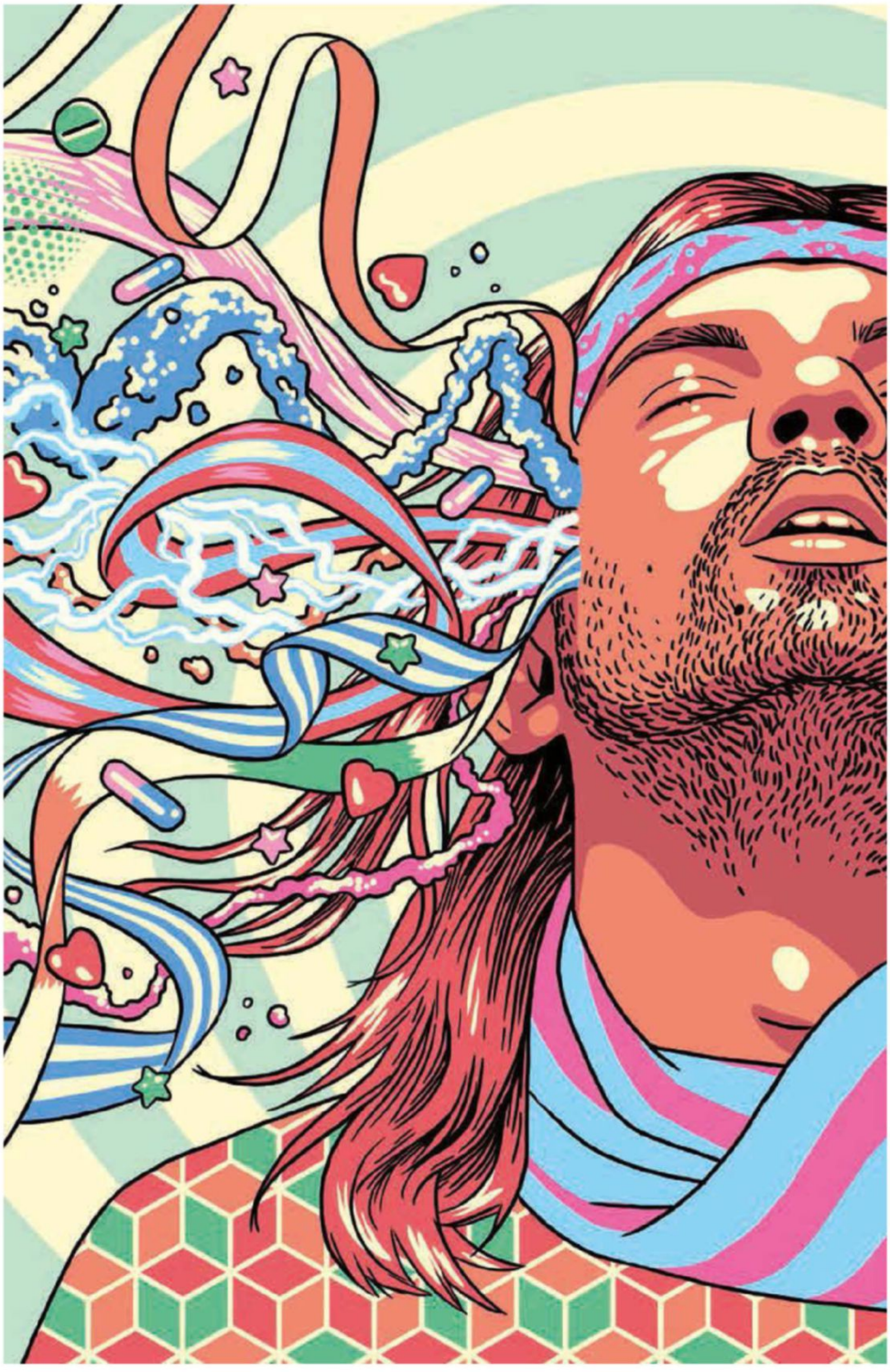
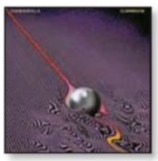


Illustration by Ross Murray

On Tame Impala's third album Kevin Parker takes another step into the unknown



Tame Impala

Currents Universal Music Australia

★★★★

BY DARREN LEVIN

It seems almost laughable now, but there was a point in time when Perth's Tame Impala garnered frequent comparisons to Cream. This was back in 2007, when a 21-year-old Kevin Parker unwittingly blew the lid off a group of friends making hits from the bong in one of the most isolated corners of the world. The scene was supportive and collaborative, with many bands swapping members like married couples in the Seventies. But despite a line-up that's since solidified into one of the best rock bands on the planet – give or take a few members – Parker has always kept Tame Impala, as a recording entity, to himself. This kid from Cottesloe with the headband and wavy locks had a vision.

Three albums in and you feel like he's inching closer to achieving it – even with the entire world now zeroing in on his every move. Like 2012's game-changing *Lonerism* and its "gotta be above it" rallying cry, *Currents* opens with a mantra. "Let it happen," Parker repeats over a backing track that's more disco than Deep Purple. "Something's trying to get out/And it's never been closer," he continues, providing a glimpse into the sense of frustration he must feel trying to make the sounds in his head tangible. The only

way to articulate that vision, he reminds himself, is to allow instinct to prevail; to "let it happen". And after eight stirring minutes – including a mind-bending bit where Parker makes us think the track is skipping, only to lead us down another sonic rabbit hole – you really do get the feeling you're watching one of rock's most restlessly creative minds at work.

For a bedroom project with unashamedly lo-fi roots, the first thing that really strikes you about *Currents* is how hi-fi it actually is. Parker has always used technology to bend organic sounds to his will, but *Currents* feels like the first Tame Impala album where the machine (mostly) prevails. A lot's been made about the record's nods to dance music – in the *Random Access Memories*, rather than Diplo, sense of the word – and it's apparent in the bass-heavy

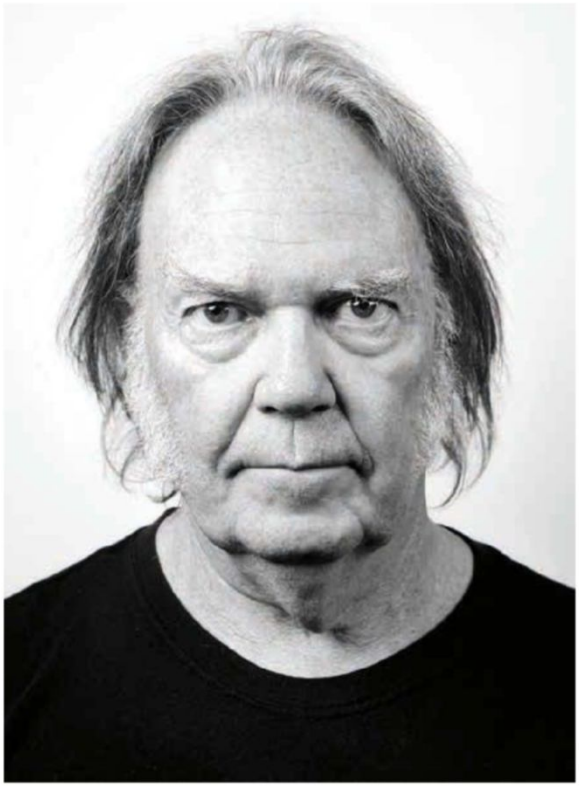
Moving forward seems like Kevin Parker's only preoccupation right now.

grooves and taut rhythms of "The Less I Know the Better".

A younger Parker would've jammed the monster riff of "Eventually" into oblivion, but it's used here as the foundation for something a bit more lush and subdued. "The Moment" repurposes the groove from Michael Jackson's "The Way You Make Me Feel" into one of the album's best tracks. There's a cosmic R&B vibe to "'Cause I'm a Man", with Parker's falsetto never sounding more vulnerable or up-front. The unabashedly poppy "Disciples", meanwhile, is *Currents*' outlier, harking back to that rumbly *Innerspeaker* sound.

According to Parker himself, *Currents* catalogues the progression of someone who feels like "they're becoming something else". No better is that articulated than on "Yes I'm Changing", which couches themes of transition in a break-up song. "They say people never change but that's bullshit/They do." For someone who once sang "Feels like we only go backwards", moving forward seems like Kevin Parker's only preoccupation right now.

KEY TRACKS: "Yes I'm Changing", "'Cause I'm a Man"



Neil Young's Righteous Fury

The legendary ragged voice of protest says "Let my people grow"

Neil Young + Promise of the Real

The Monsanto Years Warner ★★★



The topical thrust of the grungefather's latest hour of protest does not lend itself to his most elegant verse. "Farmers won't be free to grow what they want to grow," he warns in "A Rock Star Bucks a Coffee Shop", "if corporate control takes over the American farm with fascist politicians and chemical giants walking arm-in-arm."

Look, he knows it's a hard sell to the self-absorbed urban consumer. "A New Day For Love" is a Trojan horse of a title that's really about shaking us out of our couch-potato torpor to recognise real and present corporate evil. "People want to hear about love," goes the sweet refrain of another song hell bent on barking about every unfolding disaster under the sun.

KEY TRACKS: "Wolf Moon", "A Rock Star Bucks a Coffee Shop"

Like pastoral odes of albums past, the ambling clip-clop of "Wolf Moon" gives thanks to the glories of nature, but in a voice crushed close to tears by "constant plundering". The heel-toe slam-thrash of "Workin' Man" tells the story of one farmer systematically destroyed by the multinational agro-chemical juggernaut decried by name on every second track.

Maybe that's what's missing from the rest: a storybook narrative that might make *The Monsanto Years* more screenplay than polemic. But with Willie Nelson's sons leading a respectable Crazy Colt and some classic roughshod Neil-isms pushing their slow release harmonic buttons, consider seeds for thought well planted. **MICHAEL DWYER**



The Getaway Plan

Dark Horses Independent

★★★½

Melbourne alt-rockers fall back on their fans to create new LP

Having survived a two-year hiatus, member departures, myriad personal obstacles and a five-year gap between albums, the Getaway Plan have rediscovered their roots on their third LP. Bypassing record labels and instead relying on their fans' generous crowdfunding efforts to create the album independently, *Dark Horses* is produced by long-time friend Samuel K, and encompasses a smorgasbord of styles. From the breathy croons of "Last Words" to the distorted vocals in "Castles In the Air" and the prolonged instrumental outro of "Dreamer Parallels", the album is a hybrid of the Getaway Plan's traditional melodic alt-rock and a taste of something new. **SALLY MCMULLEN**



Suze DeMarchi

Home Social Family Records

★★★½

Solo Baby Animal reflects on the gilded cage of life

"Our House", Graham Nash's post-hippie ode to cats-and-vases domesticity, seems a twee keynote for a covers album about home. Somewhere between the psychedelic choogle and nifty harmonic twists of her duet with Russell Morris, however, you suddenly remember. Suze DeMarchi rocks. *Home* turns out to mean many things at this fork in her road, from the forgiving harbour of Ryan Adams' "Come Home" to the sinking feeling of a life half-lived in Sheryl Crow's "Home". But DeMarchi's pipes and ear for a great guitar sound draw classics from the Box Tops to the Clash soundly under one roof. While Tex, Barnesy and Diesel turn up late, it's the life that rings in her voice that hits the resonant chords. **M.D.**

MICHAEL BUCKNER/GETTY IMAGES

Rap's New Acid King

A$AP Rocky takes a deep, trippy plunge on his ambitious second LP

A$AP Rocky *At.Long.Last.A$AP*

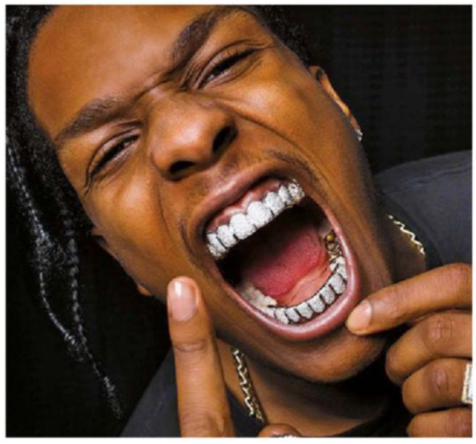
A$AP Worldwide/RCA ★★★½



"Your favourite rappers' corpses couldn't match up to my importance," A$AP Rocky boasts. To put yourself above the sainted ghosts of Biggie and Pac, you've got to either be really good, crazily ambitious or just plain high – and on his second studio LP, the Harlem rapper is all these things and more.

At.Long.Last.A$AP takes the gritty East Coast classicism and syrup-drippin' Houston screwiness of his killer 2013 debut, *Long.Live. A$AP,* and adds an extra level of psychedelic sprawl via a newfound taste for acid. "I introduce her to this hippie life/Make love under pretty lights," he raps on the lustrous "LSD". Producers like Danger Mouse, Kanye West, Mark Ronson and Rocky himself keep the expansive vibe rolling with a sound that's at once tough and transporting – from the gospel-steeped "Holy Ghost" to the interplanetary ass-shaker "Electric Body"

KEY TRACKS: "LSD", "Holy Ghost", "Max B"



to the Rod Stewart-sampling soul fantasia "Everyday" (featuring Miguel).

Even at his trippiest, Rocky makes sure things never swirl off in a haze of incense and peppermints, with steely lyrics that often focus on inescapable truths: "Richer's growing richer/The poor's growing weak/My brother died in the streets/May he rest in peace," Rocky raps on "Max B". His head's in the stratosphere, but his mind is heavy with reality. **JON DOLAN**



High Tension

Bully Double Cross/Cooking Vinyl

★★★★

Australian punk supergroup crush second album

Two records in and High Tension's impeccable pedigree (Young & Restless, Nation Blue, Heirs) barely matters; the quartet's abrasive hardcore feels like spontaneous chaos. Karina Utomo – whose voice could strip paint from a house … and then burn it down – leads the cacophonic deathcore punk charge, her growls giving way to touches of sweetness in "Mass Grave" and "Killed by Life", merging with Ash Pegram's riffs in terrifying fashion. When stretching their hardcore out just a hint – as in (the amazing) "What's Left", "Sports", "Guillotine" and the brilliant "Lucky Country (Pt 2)" – High Tension find the ideal mix of songcraft and head trauma-causing brutality. **JAYMZ CLEMENTS**



Fraser A. Gorman

Slow Gum Milk!/Caroline

★★★★

Victorian songsmith comes of age with impressive debut

"Country music sounds to me like rock & roll," sings Fraser A. Gorman on "Broken Hands". *Slow Gum* gives privileged access to the 24-year-old carpenter-cum-chicken-fancier's singular ear. Featuring backing from You Am I guitarist Davey Lane and Stu Mackenzie of King Gizzard on drums, the LP builds on the country-folk storytelling of early single and EP efforts. Gorman has described the overarching theme of *Slow Gum* in terms of "growing up". True to that, psychosexual symbology centred on rockets and missiles proliferates. There's meditative folk in "Big Old World", echoes of the Band in "My Old Man", and a nod to Lou Reed in "Book of Love". *Slow Gum* is irreverent, pithy, soulful and smart. **G.H.**



Batpiss

Biomass Poison City

★★★½

Sludgey post-punk from Melbourne delivers in spades

Biomass is an apt name for Batpiss's second LP. The album heaves with a weighty, pulsing density that's built from pulsar-heavy bass and squeals of guitar; a glue huffing nightmare writ large. It unfurls in spitfire fashion; all roiling discordant post-punk shredfests like "Death Will…" and "Daredevil" butting against the heavy-lidded riffs of "Pulling Out" and "Heavy Smoke". The skewed pop chops of highlight "The Idiot" owe a debt to Big Black and the Jesus Lizard, and Batpiss possess the hairy intensity (and implied levity) of their sludge-punk forebears. Most impressive is the riff mastery on show; songs skip around heavy, skewering riffs with a light touch, making for a record that keeps offering up surprises. **J.C.**



Ducktails

St. Catherine Domino

★★★

Fifth and most accomplished release for Real Estate member

It's sometimes hard to tell where Ducktails starts and Real Estate ends. Despite its experimental beginnings, Matt Mondanile has been closing the sonic gap between his solo project and more famous "other" band with each passing release. And so it continues on *St. Catherine*, which returns to the ambition of 2013's *The Flower Lane* after a stopgap EP, *Wish Hotel*, that was more lo-fi but just as laidback. The title track, with phased guitars and languid vocals, could be seamlessly inserted into the Real Estate oeuvre, but Mondanile has really pushed himself with the help of producer Rob Schnapf. Julia Holter guests on "Church", which pairs easy melodies with Mondanile's emerging compositional skills. **DARREN LEVIN**



FFS

FFS Domino

★★★½

Franz Ferdinand and Sparks find the year's most unlikely thrills

Well, here's a supergroup nobody would have predicted. In this corner, Sparks, the 1970s art-rock duo who drove Britannia mad back in the day with endearingly flaky albums like *Kimono My House*. And in that corner, Franz Ferdinand, the Scottish lads who've written a sizable chunk of the past decade's best guitar songs. Both bands share a wildly eccentric sense of melodrama, which is why the combination clicks. The vocal frills make Freddie Mercury sound like Joey Ramone – especially the droll seven-minute suite "Collaborations Don't Work". The unequivocal highlight is "So Desu Ne", a manic synth-pop ode to a Japanese playgirl with a "Hello Kitty Uzi". Soon everyone will want one. **ROB SHEFFIELD**

DREW GURIAN/RED BULL CONTENT POOL



Veruca Salt

Ghost Notes El Camino

★★★★

The seether is no longer on a short leash with Chicago vets

Despite emerging in 1993 on the lashing tail of riot grrrl, Veruca Salt's only manifesto was to make fierce rock & roll. They've slid back into gear, 18 years after the original line-up splintered, and though sonically they're preserved in amber, so are their grievances. Some tracks are about the old days, such as the stormy "Prince of Wales" (the Melbourne venue at which Louise Post was carried off stage at the height of the band's turmoil) and "I'm Telling You Now" – in which getting the last word via the mic has never sounded so triumphant. The dual narrative of Post and Nina Gordon is reminiscent of ABBA or Fleetwood Mac singing each other's wrongdoings. Compelling. **JENNY VALENTISH**



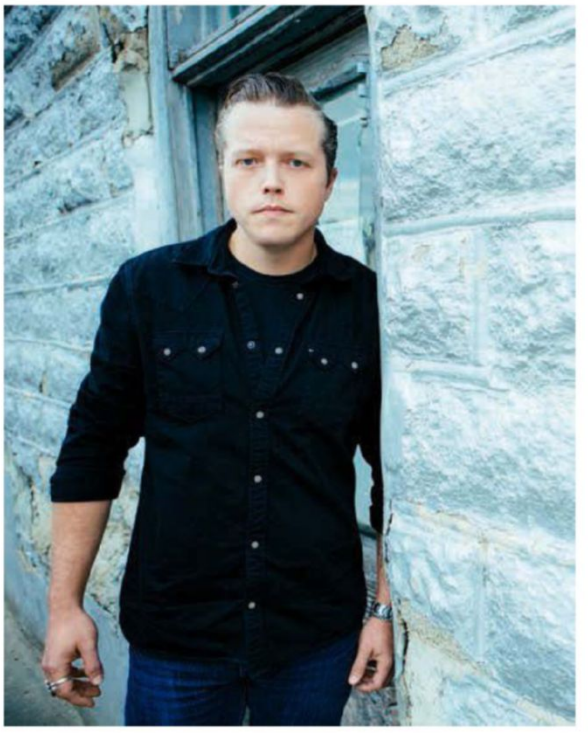
Katie Noonan

Transmutant Kin Music/Universal

★★★★

Multi-award winning vocalist gets personal

Katie Noonan is yet another artist with a rich legacy to harness crowdfunding platforms, with *Transmutant* reaching 185 per cent of its goal on PledgeMusic. On the stark, string-laden "Broken", Noonan sings "facing yourself can be ugly", and throughout the album she contrasts astonishing joy with bleak self-discovery, producing her most personal record yet. Noonan's voice is an exquisite instrument – especially on "An Unwinnable Race" – and while her hymnal ballads can become a little too even-tempered, she confidently experiments with off-kilter rhythms and whimsical pop. And on "In the Name Of the Father", a duet with Jordan White, she produces one of the most haunting moments of her career. **MICHAEL WILTON**



Reflections on the American Dream

Former Drive-By Trucker dissects family, identity, and the rigours of everyday being

Jason Isbell *Something More Than Free*

Thirty Tigers/Spunk ★★★★½



Jason Isbell's three-album stint with Drive-By Truckers in the early 2000s threw up a spray of towering compositions from the Green Hill, AL native: "Outfit", "Decoration Day", and "Danko/Manuel" remain oft-cited emblems both of DBT's glory days and Isbell's own measured, observational style. Despite moments of vanishing genius, though, Isbell struggled to find a level with solo debut *Sirens of the Ditch* (2007) and two spotty efforts with the 400 Unit. Then came *Southeastern* (2013), the masterwork of an artist fully-formed.

Expectations attending *Something More Than Free*, then, are high. Isbell's most "country" release to date, the album seemingly finds the singer – married, sober, and expecting – a happy man. Yet it bristles with astute reflections on a shrinking American dream.

KEY TRACKS: "24 Frames", "Speed Trap Town"

"Workin' for the county keeps me pissin' clear," Isbell sings on "If It Takes a Lifetime", a telling survey of the once-alien rhythms of domesticity. Isbell's formidable powers of observation and narrative restraint underpin "Flagship", a rumination on love and the corrosiveness of time, while the nostalgic "The Life You Chose" deftly demolishes vain notions of self-determination. There's a Neil Young-influenced meditation on the inheritance of thwarted hopes in "Children of Children", and the slow death of a shiftless, unknowable father in "Speed Trap Town".

Literary and tuneful, *Something More Than Free* is a brilliant, arresting document of resignation. **GARETH HIPWELL**



The Orb

Moonbuilding 2703 AD

Kompakt ★★★½

Electronic veterans choose refinement over weirdness

The Orb's discography contains moments of sheer ambient brilliance and more than a couple of failed experiments. But the group – helmed for almost 30 years by British producer Alex Paterson – have reached something close to equilibrium here. Working again with German techno mainstay Thomas Fehlmann, Paterson has found the middle ground between the quirky sample-based journeys that brought him fame in the 1990s and the self-consciously "current" vocal-led work he delivered in the 2000s. The album's four languid instrumental tracks unspool in strange directions, but Fehlmann's synth programming maintains forward momentum. Solid, if not groundbreaking. **D.F.S.**



Day Ravies

Liminal Zones Social Masala/Strange Pursuits ★★★½

Sydney four-piece shake off the shoegaze tag on album two

On *Liminal Zones*, Day Ravies wear the shoegaze label like an ill-fitting pair of Converse Chuck's. They've always had that 4AD sound down pat – album opener "Fake Beach" is a dreamy stomp box odyssey – but there's enough variety here to keep you from slowdiving off a cliff. Much of that has to do with a shared songwriting (and singing) load. Lani Crooks' breathy vocals feature on the bulk, including the synth-led "This Side of the Fence", which sounds like Broadcast covering Stereolab. But there are great cameos from Sam Wilkinson, who does his best Robert Forster on "Hickford Whizz"; and Caroline de Dear, whose star turn on "Halfway Up a Hill" proves this band can be both melodic and kooky. **DARREN LEVIN**

James Taylor's New Reflections

The singer-songwriter looks back at his life on a warm, direct folk album

James Taylor *Before This World* Concord

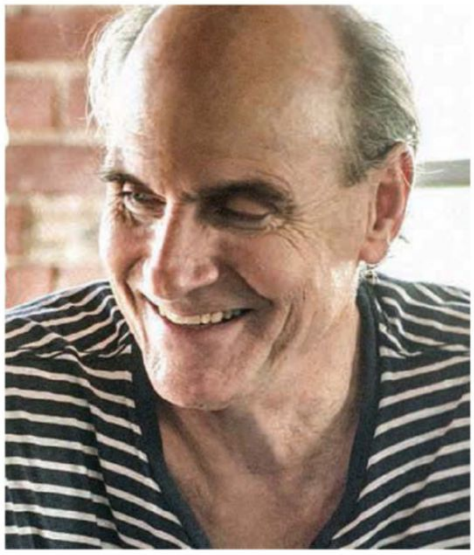
★★★½



On his first album of new songs in 13 years – a long wait even by his meticulous standards – James Taylor's past is never far in the rearview mirror. "Somehow I haven't died," he observes in "Today Today Today", the album's back-porch-ready single. "Angels of Fenway" is a poignant reflection on his late grandmother and her devotion to the Red Sox; as he sings, 1965, the year Taylor became a Sox fan, "doesn't seem like a long time ago".

The simplicity of the music matches Taylor's nostalgic mood. With its renewed focus on his voice and guitar – both miraculously unscarred by time and excess – *Before This World* is the most direct studio record he has made in many years. Told from an American soldier's conflicted point of view, "Far Afghanistan" has the subtle intensity and Celtic song roots of Taylor's early work. The pairing of the meditative title track with the spring-in-its-step of "Jolly Springtime" feels like an older, wiser version of his multipart classic "Suite for 20G", from 1970. Even with a few slightly cornball moments (the world-music salute "SnowTime") and an occasional over-reliance on gauzy harmonies that threaten to depersonalise the songs, *Before This World* is sweet grown-up James.

KEY TRACK: "Today Today Today"



DAVID BROWNE



Thy Art Is Murder *Holy War* UNFD

★★★★

Deathcore quartet wage a war against the world with third LP

Sydney's Thy Art Is Murder kept their most recent studio sessions under wraps and, away from public pressures and expectations, created *Holy War*. Their darkest and most technically complex release yet, the quintet have veered away from their usually intimate subject matter to fire shots in the war on inequality, cruelty and institutional indoctrination. Thy Art don't stray too far from their sonic roots, though, with chugging drum beats, intricate guitar riffs and CJ McMahon's signature growl remaining as driving forces. Produced by Will Putney (Northlane), "Deliver Us To Evil" and "Holy War" portray the fusion of Thy Art's sound and the album's anarchic lyrics perfectly.

SALLY MCMULLEN



Juan Wauters *Who Me?* Spunk

★★★★

Less is more for unassuming South American

The second album from this Uruguayan New Yorker is a witty and sincere exercise in wreaking maximum effect from minimal sophistication. The 13 tracks are short, blunt, and though less brattish than his old band the Beets, infused with the punk ethic that eschews both lyrical ambiguity and instrumental ambition. Wauters possesses an urbane, streetwise sense of humour which, along with the slightly nasal vocals and songs sung in Spanish, makes Rodriguez an obvious touchstone too. Primitive synthesiser parts ensure *Who Me?* offers more dimensions that mere acoustic balladry, with "I Was Well" and "This Is I" proving that Wauters' simplicity of expression only heightens his powers.

B.S.



Kamasi Washington *The Epic* Brainfeeder

★★★½

A magnum opus of 21st-century jazz from a Kendrick Lamar pal

Part of an exploding network of L.A. visionaries, Kamasi Washington is the sax-wielding jazz guru on recent masterpieces by Kendrick Lamar and Flying Lotus. Now he's made one of his own – a three-disc debut on FlyLo's label with a 10-piece band, plus choir and strings. To be sure, it's a jazz album, as much about tradition as expanding it, informed by Coltranes (John and Alice), Miles Davis fusions, bebop and more; yet it's clearly shaped by crate-digger funk and film scores, hip-hop collage and gospel. Patrice Quinn's incantatory soul vocals ground stretches of remarkably mobile group improv. But the MVP may be electric bassist Thundercat, a low-end guitar hero extraordinaire.

WILL HERMES



Warren Haynes *Ashes & Dust* Provogue/Mascot

★★½

Gov't Mule mainstay tackles Americana on third solo outing

Ashes & Dust sees former Allman Brothers Band/the Dead guitarist Warren Haynes hitch his wagon to established bluegrass outfit Railroad Earth. The prevailing singer-songwriter thrust of *Ashes & Dust* is a far cry from the tedious blues-rock of *Tales of Ordinary Madness* (1993) and passable funk, soul, and R&B of *Man in Motion* (2011). Haynes mines the Americana canon, with classic string-band sounds scoring tales of bounty hunters ("Glory Road"), working man's laments ("Coal Tattoo"), and Celtic balladry ("Blue Maiden's Tale"). That Haynes and RE share a penchant for the bloated and overlong, though, is highlighted by a handful of forgettable jam-stacked affairs ("Spots Of Time").

GARETH HIPWELL



Joy Williams *Venus* Columbia

★★½

A singer's post-Civil Wars reconstruction doesn't stick

The tension between brooding country boy John Paul White and recovering Christian-pop singer Joy Williams gave the Civil Wars' smouldering (and Grammy winning) folk rock an archetypal sexiness. Williams' first solo set following their 2014 split is archetypal, too – a woman dusts herself off for a journey of reinvention that feels very *Eat, Pray, Love*. The album's gospel-flavoured synth-pop is invitingly adventurous, but 32-year-old Williams can't hold the space like her touchstones here. See "Woman (Oh Mama)", a chant recalling Nina Simone that needs more dynamics and grit. Yet leaner arrangements ("The Dying Kind") showcase a fragile, potent voice that still haunts.

W.H.



Leon Bridges

Coming Home Sony

★★★

Warm-hearted throwback soul offers familiar comforts

Everything about the debut from 25-year-old U.S. soul singer Leon Bridges is unashamedly old fashioned: from the faux-retro cover art to the early-Stax analog production to the chaste lyrical content ("Ooh baby, don't you know you're a cutie pie?" is about as raunchy as it gets), this is throwback R&B at its most reverential. With the voice and charm of a young Sam Cooke, Bridges pulls it off convincingly, although the overtly religious overtones may be off-putting to some ("I wanna tell you about the good news!" Bridges joyously hollers on "Flowers" among references to eternity and salvation). It's too firmly rooted in the past to offer any genuine thrills, but it's still a warm hug of a debut. **J.J.**



Ratatat

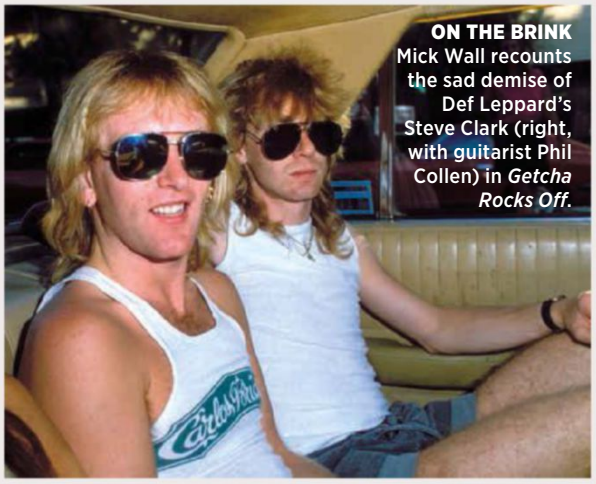
Magnifique Remote Control

★★★★

First album in five years for electro-rock instrumentalists

On the spectrum of good cheese to bad cheese, RATATAT are more a three-year aged gruyere than a pack of Kraft Singles. Mike Stroud and Evan Mast have gone back to the twin guitar attack of their self-titled 2004 LP, and put together their strongest set of actual songs yet. Ostensibly a band without a singer, RATATAT'S double-tracked guitars "sing" the hooks on the irresistibly poppy "Abrasive", which sounds like two robots trading licks. But just when you thought you had this duo's yacht-meets-electro-meets-rock sound pegged, they bust out the pedal steel on the sublime "Drift", re-contextualising Santo & Johnny's late-50s hit "Sleepwalking" for a post-modern world. **DARREN LEVIN**

BOOKS



ON THE BRINK Mick Wall recounts the sad demise of Def Leppard's Steve Clark (right, with guitarist Phil Collen) in *Getcha Rocks Off*.

The Sordid Road To Rock & Roll Ruin

Mick Wall *Getcha Rocks Off: Sex & Excess, Bust-Ups & Binges, Life & Death on the Rock'N'Roll Road*

Hachette Australia ★★★½



It says something about British journalist Mick Wall that his semi-autobiography lives up to the sordid promise of its title. A one-time speed dealer who blagged his way into writing for heavy metal bible *Kerrang!* and then a presenting gig on Sky TV's *Monsters Of Rock* (not to mention a dalliance as a record company PR), Wall's book starts with a three-day sex and drugs binge at the Sunset Marquis and rarely slows down. About halfway through he moves the focus from himself to some of his favourite artists (Ozzy, Lemmy), a shift which jars but still entertains. **SIMON JONES**

Jeremy Oxley and Mary Oxley Griffiths *Here Comes the Sun*

Allen & Unwin ★★½



This dual autobiography proves Huey Lewis right: the power of love might just save your life. For Jeremy Oxley, of 1980s, Sixties-hued alt-pop outfit the Sunnyboys, the patience and persistence of his co-author has contained the crippling schizophrenia which truncated his obvious talent, providing family life, stability and the ability to work again. Sunnyboys fans will find much of this familiar, as it acts as a companion and coda to Kaye Harrison's 2013 documentary film *The Sunnyboy*. As such it is less a rock biog than autumnal love story: genuine, but ho-hum, and for ardent fans only. **DANIEL MURPHY**

James Anfuso *Rockin Australia: 50 Years of Concert Posters 1957-2007*

Starman Books ★★★★½



Perth collector James Anfuso has spent 30 years collecting posters of gigs and tours of Australia, and the result is this mammoth boxset – a three-volume, 1200-page collection of 2052 gig posters spanning the years 1957 to 2007. The acts covered range from the forgotten (Godstar) to the massive (U2) and all points in between – it's a veritable trip down memory lane for any serious concert goers of the past five decades. At 13 kilograms you'll need a sturdy coffee table to hold it, but it's worth buying one. **S.J.**



Third Eye Blind

Dopamine Mega Collider

★★★

Nineties alt-rock vets can still bring the irony – and the hooks

Five albums and 18 years down the road from ubiquitous chart-topper "Semi-Charmed Life", Third Eye Blind frontman Stephan Jenkins still rocks the same springy sing-rap, and he's still got a knack for spinning sunshine out of moody tunes – "Everything Is Easy" and "Back to Zero" reimagine the Cure and Arcade Fire as radio gold, and "Rites of Passage" kicks references to Occupy and Bowie over a bounce Chandler Bing could get down to. Jenkins' Nineties irony rages forth on "Get Me Out of Here", about a rocker whose fantasy is reaching its expiration date. But there's enough hooky music here to suggest Jenkins is hellbent on making sure that won't happen to him. **JON DOLAN**



Adam Lambert

The Original High Warner Bros.

★★★

Singer's third LP is laced with big hooks, over-the-top energy

Adam Lambert is so great at glam-rock theatrics that he toured the world as Queen's frontman last year. On his third LP, though, the onetime *American Idol* runner-up channels the softer corners of his impressive vocal range over radio-friendly deep-house beats. Lambert is still larger-than-life on tracks like the power ballad "There I Said It", where he sings the silly line "I'm a grown-ass man" with utter conviction, and the pop-rock highlight "Lucy" ignites with a guest appearance from Brian May. Even when the lyrics verge on ridiculousness (on the Tove Lo-featuring "Rumors", Lambert denounces "haterade"), he's one of the biggest personalities in pop. **BRITTANY SPANOS**

GETTY IMAGES

Refused's New Noise

Swedish hardcore heroes rejoin the fight exactly where they left off



Refused *Freedom*

Epitaph ★★★½



When Swedish punks Refused spectacularly called time on their band in 1998, shortly after releasing one of the defining punk records of all time, it seemed hard to imagine that they could ever come out of retirement with their integrity intact. Ever able to surprise, the quartet have not only brazenly gone back on their word that "Refused are fucking dead", but they've had the gall to release an album that takes off almost exactly where *The Shape Of Punk To Come* left off.

KEY TRACKS: "Old Friends/ New War", "Dawkins Christ"

Album opener "Elektra" is a great anchor, reminding us what Refused used to sound like – all surgical riffing and revolution chants delivered at maximum velocity. Then, as they did on *The Shape Of Punk. . .*, Refused change gear drastically, over and over again. "Françafrique" melds Faith No More's theatrics with Chili Peppers funk-punk, "Useless Europeans" hints at Bowie's Berlin phase, and songs like "366" have more than a dose of chart-pop mixed in with the punk clamour.

Producer Nick Launay, although an inspired choice, perhaps lacks the hardcore credentials to capture the more extreme edges of Refused's sound, but deserves props for trying. As middle-aged men, Refused lack a *little* of the spit and fire of their younger selves, but they can still fan the flames of discontent better than any of their punk-by-numbers contemporaries. **MATT COYTE**



Tuka

Life Death Time Eternal

Big Village/EMI ★★★½

Thundamentals emcee goes exploring on third solo outing

Emcee Tuka, better known as part of Thundamentals, has opened the sound up from his rap roots on his third solo outing. Starting with a choral flourish and echoing piano, his familiar flow is layered onto unfamiliar backing, taking in everything from electronica to folk. At heart a philosophical and occasionally dark record, *Life Death Time Eternal* resists classification as hip-hop, but it's loaded with slick wordplay. First single "Tattoo" candidly unpacks the feeling of seeing an ex without hiding behind any lyrical bravado. A few tracks later the Schoolboy Q-esque "Yeah Right" successfully serves up a rare rap moment, but it's an exception on a record that shines as it explores new territory. **DAN FINDLAY**



The Deslondes

The Deslondes New West

★★★★

New Orleans quintet triumph on country-soaked debut album

With their Nashville-recorded debut the Deslondes have delivered a collection of rich and warm songs that, though based in the country vein, shimmer with southern R&B and stomping honky tonk. Upright bass, pedal steel, fiddle, duel guitars, percussion and four-part harmonies shine as the band breeze through a set that ebbs and flows between slower numbers like "Heavenly Home" and "Simple and True" (where the harmonies are truly magical) and the faster-paced likes of "Less Honkin' More Tonkin'" and "The Real Deal". This is indeed the real deal, honest and true country music from a group destined to make their mark on the thriving U.S. Americana scene. **SAMUEL J. FELL**



Lindemann

Skills in Pills Warner

★★★★

Germany's most iconic rock star steps into the dark

For the defiantly monolingual English speaking world, the real beauty of Rammstein is that listeners have almost no idea about what the band is singing. One of the conditions of its frontman, Till Lindemann, releasing an album under his own steam was that the Berliner deliver his songs in English. Because of this, listeners from Sydney to Sunderland can revel in an album soused in strange sexual proclivities and profanity. Despite this, *Skills In Pills* zips along with a buoyancy that is light to the touch, sometimes even flippant. More than this, Till Lindemann's continued elevation to the title of rock music's most subversive talent manages to prosper in a foreign tongue. **IAN WINWOOD**



Art of Sleeping

Shake Shiver Dew Process

★★

Debut album sticks firmly to the middle of the road

The debut from Brisbane five-piece Art of Sleeping confirms the old maxim that "by trying to please everyone, you please no-one". *Shake Shiver* is folk-inflected pop-rock at its most polite and inoffensive, a sort of generic soundtrack designed to instill an indefinable sense of uplift in undemanding festival crowds. It's all played and sung competently enough – there's not a single note out of place anywhere, and singer Caleb Hodges has echoes of a young Bono lurking in his voice – but by working in such broad strokes the predictable results are too often high on sweeping bombast and low on any kind of genuine emotional resonance or compelling sense of identity. **JAMES JENNINGS**



mewithoutYou

Pale Horses

Cooking Vinyl Australia ★★★

Relentlessly sombre set that flows well but fails to inspire

Fans of this long-running Philadelphia five-piece will be pleased to know that, six albums in, vocalist Aaron Weiss still has many interesting things to say about spirituality, while his bandmates explore artsy rock sub-genres with aplomb. *Pale Horses* cherry-picks the most successful stylistic elements from mewithoutYou's back-catalogue (a touch of post-hardcore here, a nod to folk there). It's a well-sculpted album, but casual followers may find themselves struggling with the bleak mood, which is magnified by Will Yip's cavernous production and lifts only slightly on the final three songs. This is dark, serious music that occasionally borders on the dreary. **D.F.S.**

DUSTIN RABIN



Alex G

Trick Spunk

★★★½

A much-thumbed handbook for lo-fi indie rock

Alex Giannascoli resurrects the mussed glory of home-recorded Nineties indie, from off-kilter guitar to faltering voice to moody instrumentals. After earning global recognition with last year's *DSU*, his 2012 LP *Trick* has been upgraded from a Bandcamp download to proper CD and vinyl. It's all too lackadaisical, offering short songs with predominately single-word titles. But if that approach can feel slight, he reliably takes darker turns. "I think you're cute/I'll keep you in the cellar," he sings on "Kute", while "Whale" jumps from choosing a favourite animal to cutting off a piece of it. Giannascoli's quavering vocals bely his buoyant melodies, and he excels at fleeting confessions like "I get sick when I get stoned." **D.W.**



MS MR

How Does It Feel Sony

★★

Minor disco diversion from New York duo's grave boudoir

Nothing in the gothic-synth mist of *Secondhand Rapture* suggested MS MR had a panting house piano raver like "Painted" up their sleeves. It's a short-lived burst of pilled-up excitement, as it happens, for the duo that came on like Florence's Welch's U.S. soulmates on their 2013 debut. There's less gloomy strings and more percussive propulsion this time out but the same nagging suspicion that singer Lizzy Plapinger is working hard to match the grandeur of Max Hershenow's electro-scapes. The ordinary relationship angst of "Criminals" and "[Please] Leave Me Alone" fails to resonate at the same pitch as the music snapping like the gates of hell at her high-heeled ankles. **M.D.**

REISSUES



Mission of Burma's Call To Arms

Boston cult heroes sound as vital as ever on reissue of classic EP

Mission of Burma *Signals, Calls and Marches* Fire Records ★★★★★



They don't make punk records like this anymore – or even back then. Released in 1981, the production of Mission of Burma's debut EP matches its timeless songwriting (from the urgent "Academy Fight Song" to the onslaught of "Max Ernst"). At a time when bands like Hüsker Dü were bashing out records in days, these Bostonians avoided the tinny sounds of their peers; a counterintuitive decision when sounding "primitive" meant "being real". Lovingly reissued on CD and vinyl – along with their classic LP *Vs* – this 34-year-old EP practically leaps out of the speakers. Perfect for the next generation to lose their shit to. **DARREN LEVIN**

Tina Turner's Grand Comeback

Tina Turner *Private Dancer* Warner ★★★



It's testament to Tina Turner's presence in the vocal booth as much as the savvy of her Aussie manager Roger Davies that *Private Dancer* salvaged her stalled career in 1984. He forged the platinum committee of writer/producers spanning Heaven 17 to Mark Knopfler. She brought an intensity of pitch that made its seven singles bite. Her Farnham-styled take on "Help!" wasn't one of them, but a too-generous bonus disc reminds us that her Bowie duet, "Tonight", would have made far worse filler. **MICHAEL DWYER**

Alex Chilton's Clanging Pop

Alex Chilton *Ocean Club '77* Norton ★★★½



In 1977, Alex Chilton was 10 years out from his Box Tops hit "The Letter" and recovering from the recent collapse of his power-pop band Big Star. Still in his mid-twenties, the Memphis singer tried his luck in New York, playing gigs like this one (in strong quasi-boot fidelity) that were as close, in plaintive voice and power-trio scruff, as he ever got live to the open wounds on Big Star's farewell, *3rd*. It's all clanging pop delivered with scrappy purism – the way Chilton did it forever after. **DAVID FRICKE**



Born Lion

Final Words Four | Four

★★★½

Sydney punks bring the rhythm and the racket on debut LP

"Don't know what I do it for/but yeah I wanna do it some more", goes the refrain on "Break the Curse", the rollicking opening track from *Final Words*. It's a mantra at odds with the sum of the Sydneysiders' effort, as the majority of these tracks are bristling with intent. That is, if the desire to pen the soundtrack to a raucous punk rock house party counts as "intent". Funky, barbed riffs give way to wildly hollered hooks, and those hooks are catchy enough to edge the quartet's post-hardcore tendencies into (ever-so-slightly) more radio friendly territory. Even the quieter stuff has chops – "Violent Soul" could pass as an acoustic Refused cut. It's unpretentious, unabashed and really rather refreshing. **OLIVER PELLING**



Lamb Of God

VII: Sturm Und Drang

Nuclear Blast ★★★★

Virginia metallers make stunning return from the brink

Had a Czechoslovakia court opted not to acquit Lamb Of God vocalist Randy Blythe of manslaughter – in 2012 he was indicted for pushing an audience member offstage at a Prague show in 2010; the fan later died from head injuries sustained – he would now be rotting in Prague's Pankrác Prison. Instead he's unleashing his trademark belch over 10 of the most vibrant, vital and violent songs of LOG's career. "512" is a mid-paced and eerily melodic chugger in which Blythe references his jailtime – "one careless word you lose your life" – while Deftones' frontman Chino Moreno pops up in "Embers" to add some welcome atmosphere. A modern metal classic. **SIMON JONES**



Miguel

Wildheart Sony

★★★★

R&B innovator's steamy new journey

At once channelling Nineties R&B crooners such as Babyface and paying reverence to Prince, Miguel's music is still his own – he writes and produces everything – and is best described by the L.A. native himself: "fly, funkadelic, intergalactic-hip-hop-meets-sexy-orgasmic crazy, dope shit". He also possesses a winning combination of swagger and vulnerability; an "NWA" who's cornier than polenta. Lyrically, "Coffee" is toe-curlingly sappy – "I wish I could paint our love/these moments and vibrant hues" – but those creamy vocals and Eighties power chords make you feel every word. "Still waiting for my big break, for fame's sake," he sings in "Hollywood Dreams". May *Wildheart* deliver what is long overdue. **ANNABEL ROSS**



Death

N.E.W. Tryangle

★★★½

Detroit punk progenitors come back to life, stay loud as ever

Back in the Seventies, these badass Detroit brothers were so punk-rock, they rejected a deal with Clive Davis on principle. Now reunited after several decades of obscurity, with new frontman Bobbie Duncan replacing late singer-guitarist David Hackney, they've summoned forth an album of new material from the abyss: whiplash-fast songs as Spartan in construction and as bracing in attack as their 40-years-young visionary predecessors. They're not nearly as scathing on the state of the nation, though: This century's Death have swapped out bad tidings for good vibrations. When rocking while black is already tantamount to a crown of thorns, who can blame 'em? **GREG TATE**



The Weather Station

Loyalty Spunk

★★★★

Tamara Lindeman's soft folk packs a solid emotional punch

There are those who feel the need to shout to get their point across, and others who'll simply whisper it to ensure you lean in close and pay attention. Toronto folk artist Tamara Lindeman falls into the latter camp, her delicate voice and spacious, fingerpicked guitar arrangements designed to gently relay stories that carry weight: the lies we tell to others; the lies we tell ourselves. The 11 songs on third LP *Loyalty* feel like eavesdropping on a private conversation within a car on a long winter road trip: something warm and intimate boldly travelling through the centre of a cold, empty landscape. For listeners compelled to hitch a ride, *Loyalty* rewards with a beautifully delivered collection of quiet revelations. **JAMES JENNINGS**



LA Priest

Inji Domino

★★★★

Solo project from former Late of the Pier singer

Though never hitting astronomical fame, history will be kind to UK synth-punks Late of the Pier, whose *Fantasy Black Channel* LP stands up seven years on. This solo project from singer Sam Dust is somewhat calmer than his former band, but no less imaginative. The combination of muscular electronica with mild soul evokes Connan Mockasin (with whom Dust is rumoured to have made a record), though without quite as much chaos. The dark analog synth riffs suggest the lingering influence of Gary Numan and *Low*-era Bowie, and the quiver of Dust's voice features a smidge of Bryan Ferry. "Oino" and "Lady's In Trouble With the Law" are outstanding examples of Dust's eccentric, melodic artistry. **BARNABY SMITH**

DVD

The Stones Live & Raw

The Rolling Stones

Live From the Vault: the Marquee – Live In 1971

Shock

★★★½





The third instalment from the Stones' *From the Vault* live series is the first to feature Mick Taylor's fat, nimble tone instead of Ronnie Wood's sprightly zing and is captured on a small stage. At only eight songs, it is too brief, but what it lacks in length and big gig razzmatazz is partially compensated by its candour and sense of moment.

Filmed and recorded at the Marquee in London as a promo for U.S. TV to promote *Sticky Fingers*, it's the first time "Bitch", "Dead Flowers", "Brown Sugar" and "I Got the Blues" are performed live, and the Stones are in the wonky, swinging, mesmerising form that was their signature through this period (the template for slacker rock of every stripe – from hair metal to alt-country). Songs begin and end with certain collywobbles – Keith's Ampeg is out of tune in "Dead Flowers" – but the Stones mid-flight in "Bitch", "Live With Me" and "Brown Sugar", or breaking down for a punch and shimmer call-and-response in an epic "Midnight Rambler", weave magic in the harmonic overtones. Extras include several attempts at "I Got the Blues", but the main show feels like they were just starting to stretch out. With 50 years of this stuff in attics, there is no doubt more to come. **DANIEL MURPHY**



Ezra Furman

Perpetual Motion People

Bella Union ★★★

Infectious stuff, but the shtick weighs a ton

U.S. songwriter Ezra Furman hops across the decades on this third album, funnelling his jumbled influences into high-anxiety bubblegum. He favours honking saxophone and doo-wop harmonies, offering Dexy's-style outbursts on "Wobbly" and super-distorted Pixies-esque mania on "Tip of a Match". "Can I Sleep in Your Brain" sums up his quirky romancing, and Furman balances all the perky dynamism with lots of vulnerable ballads. Restless and volatile, between his emotive yet self-aware lyrics and the constant grab-bag of hooks, *Perpetual Motion People* is hard to resist. But Furman still has some way to go in making all these scattered ideas his own. **DOUG WALLEN**



TIME BANDIT Carey Mulligan shines in this period costume drama

Hardy's Heroine Diaries

Carey Mulligan brings life to this adaptation of Thomas Hardy's classic novel By Peter Travers

Far From the Madding Crowd

Carey Mulligan, Matthias Schoenaerts, Michael Sheen

Directed by Thomas Vinterberg

★★★

CHEERS TO DANISH DIRECTOR Thomas Vinterberg for blowing the antiquated dust off Thomas Hardy's 1874 novel about a wilful heroine who'd rather muck about in sheep dip on a farm she inherited than marry guys who treat her like property. John Schlesinger made a long, lumpy film of the novel in 1967 that even a luminous Julie Christie couldn't lift from the doldrums.

Vinterberg, working from a tight script by David Nicholls, cuts to the chase. And he has the magnificent Carey Mulligan to play Bathsheba Everdeen, a proto-feminist in the Katniss manner. Sheepherder Gabriel Oak (Matthias Schoenaerts) and gentleman farmer William Boldwood (Michael Sheen) propose to her practically on first sight. She refuses. "I'd like to be a bride at a wedding," she says, "but without a husband." Then Bathsheba falls hard for Sgt. Troy (Tom Sturridge), a dashing soldier with a saber he likes to thrust at her face like a swinging dick. Hot stuff for a period film set in the English countryside. Vinterberg may rush the final act, but he gets pitch-perfect performances from Schoenaerts, Sheen and Sturridge and brings out the wild side in Mulligan, who can hold a close-up like nobody's business. She's a live wire in a movie that knows how to stir up a classic for the here and now.

Love & Mercy

Paul Dano, John Cusack

Directed by Bill Pohlad

★★★

YOU GOTTA LOVE A BIOPIC that shakes things up. Just like Brian Wilson, the Beach Boys innovator whose gifts as singer, songwriter and producer were based on experimentation. Instead of one actor to portray Wilson, sidelined by drugs and mental illness, director Bill Pohlad gives us two, both superb in different ways. Paul Dano, who put on kilos to further the moon-faced likeness, plays Wilson during the 1960s, at the height of his artistic creativity. John Cusack, who looks distractingly unlike Wilson, plays the shaken genius during the 1980s, when he barely emerged from the pill-induced haze created by therapist Eugene Landy (a full-tilt Paul Giamatti). His rescuer is Cadillac saleswoman Melinda Ledbetter (Elizabeth Banks), who became his second wife. Does Ledbetter's consulting credit skew the film dramatically? Maybe. But the whip-smart script, by Oren Moverman and Michael Alan Lerner, neatly sidesteps cliché. So does Dino Jonsater's editing, which shuns the linear to skip between time periods until juxtaposition yields clarity. Musically, the film is a miracle, right and riveting in every detail. Just watch Wilson in the studio, coaxing musicians on "Good Vibrations" and *Pet Sounds,* which uses whistles, bicycle bells and barking dogs to approach what Wilson hears in his head. In contrast to Cusack's introspection, Dano lets it bleed, giving a performance awards were invented for. You can't take your eyes off him.

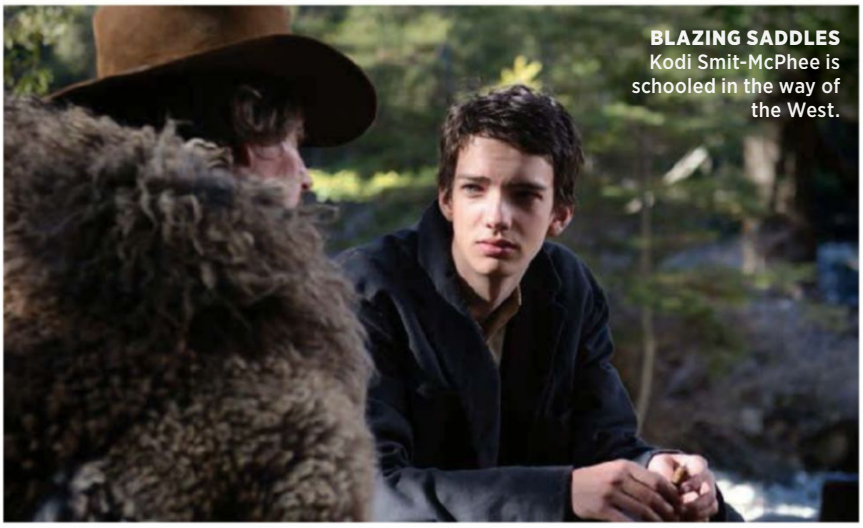


PET SCENES Dano as Wilson

Love & Hate in the Wild West

New Zealand-shot Western packs plenty of surprises

By Michael Adams



BLAZING SADDLES Kodi Smit-McPhee is schooled in the way of the West.

Slow West

Kodi Smit-McPhee, Michael Fassbender

Directed by John Maclean

★★★★½



Perhaps the title is to blame, but even positive reviews used the term "meandering" to describe *Slow West*. Forget that – writer-director John Maclean's excellent debut packs more into its trim 84 minutes than most blockbusters manage in twice the running time. Granted, the characters don't gallop their horses across the prairies, but there's much here to get the heart racing and the eyes widening.

Kodi Smit-McPhee is young Scottish immigrant Jay, searching for his lost love on the American frontier in 1870. Against his will, he gets the help of Michael Fassbender's bounty hunter Silas, though the protection of such a bastard might be the only way to survive outlaw and Indian attacks.

Father-son and Western genre tropes are in place, but Maclean spins them smartly and unpredictably. Smit-McPhee's naïf seems the moral centre, though his wrongheartedness leads to much slaughter. Fassbender's toughie, meanwhile, proves a genuine hero, just not one who's hugely effective, leaving the supposed damsel in distress to save – and ruin – the day. Maclean gets terrific performances, including Ben Mendelsohn as Silas's crazed former gang leader Payne. *Slow West* also looks and sounds amazing, thanks to cinematographer Robbie Ryan lensing New Zealand's stark wilderness as the old West envisaged anew, and Aussie Jed Kurzel providing a cracking soundtrack.

Intriguing, funny, surreal, jolting and moving, *Slow West* feels both familiar and startlingly fresh.



Justified S6

Timothy Olyphant

Created by Graham Yost

★★★★½

"There's a small part of me that's going to miss this when it's over" – so says Timothy Olyphant's U.S. marshall Raylan Givens to Walton Goggins' friend-turned-nemesis-outlaw Boyd Crowder in this final season of the wittiest drama on TV. We, too, will miss the endlessly verbose cast of colourful cops, crims and miscreants. Happily, after a faltering fifth season, *Justified* comes home strong, with our anti-hero Raylan digging deep to bring down Crowder and his corrupt colleagues and competitors once and for all. Excitingly, not all of the bullets find the targets you expect.



Big Eyes

Amy Adams

Directed by Tim Burton

★★★

Mid-20th century artist Margaret Keane created a global sensation with her paintings of big-eyed waifs. Not that the world knew she was responsible for these kitsch classics because her husband Walter claimed credit. Written by the team responsible for *Ed Wood*, this Tim Burton film has more in common with that earnest classic than any of his recent soulless fairytales. The director's obsession with outsiders gives this heart and he gets touching work from Amy Adams as the angsty, abused artist. But Christoph Waltz walks off with the show as the endlessly scheming Walter.



Project Almanac

Amy Landecker

Directed by Dean Israelite

★

Ah, what would you do if you found your dead dad's time-machine plans in the basement and had the intellectual wherewithal to finish it off and go jauntily into the parallel universes? This idiotic "found footage" film naturally supposes American teens would use it to get petty revenge on their high-school pals, manipulate hotties into having sex, go backstage with Imagine Dragons at Lollapalooza. Puh-lease. Produced by Michael Bay, *Project Almanac* squanders its familiar but endlessly intriguing paradoxical premise – and takes forever to do it. For far better fun, rewatch the superior *Chronicle*.



A Most Violent Year

Oscar Isaac

Directed by J.C. Chandor

★★★★

This unpredictable drama – perhaps, like *Slow West*, done a disservice by its title – sees heater-oil magnate Abel resisting violent retaliation in the face of criminal attack in corrupt New York City, 1981. Oscar Isaac broods heroically in what's an anti-*Goodfellas* role – all his life Abel has tried to not be a gangster – and he's strongly supported by Jessica Chastain and David Oyelowo. J.C. Chandor writes with a complex sense of moral struggle and directs with a downbeat 1970s realism, following up strongly on the promise of his terrific *Margin Call* and *All Is Lost*.

Jenny Lewis

The singer-songwriter on drinking onstage, and where she'd like to be buried

By Rod Yates



The last time I was starstruck

I was at the MusiCares benefit that honoured Bob Dylan a couple of months ago with Beck, singing back-ups, and I was about five feet away from Dylan, and I of course didn't go up to him. I didn't even want to look at him dead on, I wanted to see him in my peripheral vision. But he was there, and it was pretty amazing being that close to Bob Dylan. He's a wizard. That's the closest I'll get to Merlin. [Laughs]

The last thing I do before going onstage

I make sure there's a proper amount of natural wine in my rainbow mug. It's not coffee or tea, as I would like for people to think. And it's not the reverse – I think Eddie Vedder has a bottle of red wine onstage and a wine bottle filled up with water. It's his Jesus bit. [Laughs] How much do I drink during a show? It's not very rock & roll, it's about half a glass when I'm playing. The thing about red wine, it's totally dehydrating, so it's like the worst thing you can drink when you're singing, it's like pouring sand on your vocal cords.

The last TV series I watched

Nashville. It's good in the same way that *Dallas* was good; it's kind of like a nighttime soap opera but with Nashville and the music business as the setting. My boyfriend and I are kind of obsessed.

The last time I stole something

I don't steal, except for occasionally I'll take a washcloth from a hotel room and then exchange it at the next hotel room with a new washcloth. It's quite a racket.

The last gig I went to

Dawes at the Hollywood Forever cemetery in Los Angeles. I was thinking, would it be cooler to be buried at the Hollywood Forever cemetery or Père Lachaise [in Paris]? That's quite beautiful, but it seems everyone would want to go and see Oscar Wilde or Jim Morrison. So, Hollywood Forever [for me]. And there's music and events at Hollywood Forever. If your friends are there for a concert they'd be like, "Oh, we'll go visit her grave." I often think about my epitaph, and my first choice would be, "I could probably live here."

The last time I forgot a lyric

This is dangerous, we shouldn't talk about it, I'm very superstitious. And I don't often forget lyrics, but when I do it can be very scary. It sometimes happens when I'm really checking out the audience. People don't realise I'm looking at you as you're looking at me. I see everyone out there. And sometimes I'll be a little too into what is going on out there and I'll forget where I'm at in my weirdly wordy songs. [Audience members] making out is distracting, but I encourage it.

My last meal would be

From this Japanese restaurant in Los Angeles, and I've been going there for about 15 years, and I only order one thing on the menu. I have never strayed. It's a Japanese Bento box. It's like a garlic tofu. I'm not a vegetarian, I don't like tofu typically, but this spicy garlic tofu is the only thing I want to eat, and that's what I'm having for dinner tonight. And let's hope that it's not my last meal and I end up over at Hollywood Forever.

The last time I was mistaken for someone else

I released a video last week for "She's Not Me", and in it there are several references, and one is to this movie I was in called *Troop Beverly Hills*. And there are two red-headed child actors in *Troop Beverly Hills*, myself and Emily Schulman, who was also on a very popular American television show called *Small Wonder*. My entire life growing up, everyone thought I was this girl who was on *Small Wonder*, Emily Schulman. Not the case. And then I put out this video and someone on Twitter was like, "Oh, were you on *Small Wonder*?" Oh, drat! Still happening!

OUT NOW



The Voyager

Jenny Lewis' latest LP, *The Voyager*, was released last year. She's appearing at Splendour in the Grass and doing side shows this month.

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